

GIFTING this WONDERFUL WORLD with EXPLOSIONS!

Continued

暁 なつめ

illustration
三嶋くろね

GIFTING
this
WONDERFUL
WORLD with
BLESSINGS!
SPINOFF

我ら、
めぐみん盗賊団
WE, THE
MEGUMIN THIEVING GROUP

TRANSLATION: YUNS & URANOPHANE
@CRIMSONMAGIC.ME

Zoku, Kono Subarashii Sekai ni Bakuen wo!

by Akatsuki Natsume

[Novel Updates](#)

Translation group: [yuNS](#)

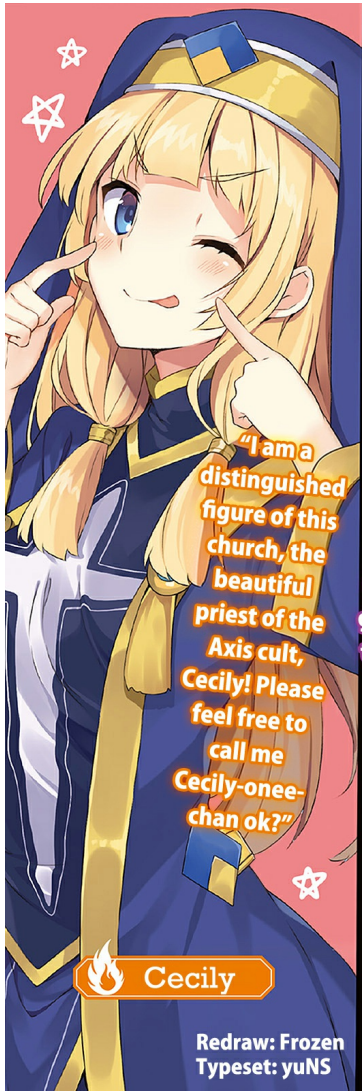
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My name is
Megumin!
The leader of a
thieving group
that performs pure,
noble, and
righteous deeds
for the sake of
the **world** and its
people!

 Megumin

Redraw: Frozen
Typeset: yuNS



🔥 Cecily

Redraw: Frozen
Typeset: yuNS



🔥 Chris



🔥 Iris



🔥 Yunyun



“Wait a second, what did the two of you discuss when I was out? Why have I been rejected without me ever being aware of it?”

“You’re mistaken Megumin! We only started working as thieves recently, and I said it before right? I don’t think anything of assistant-kun! We’re just friends, and we don’t have any special feelings ok!?”

“Uhm, are you two close with one another? Since when did you have this sort of relationship?”

 Kazuma

Redraw: Katomon
Typeset: yuNS



続
この素晴らしい世界に
爆焰を！
我ら、めぐみん盗賊団

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口絵・本文イラスト / 三嶋くろね
口絵・本文デザイン / 百足屋ユウコ + モンマ蚕 (ムシカゴグラフィクス)

Prologue



It happened on the night of the fireworks festival. The festival that I was supposed to go to with that person.

After I failed to fulfill my promise with that person, when I was dragging myself home with depressed steps——

——I came across the mansion of the corrupt nobles known as Undine.

At the outskirts of the mansion, I spotted a pair of strange looking people.

When I saw that mask that one of them wore, I felt my heart skip a beat.

What is this? Was I always such a simple girl?

I should be someone that isn't swayed so easily by appearances, but...

I gathered my resolve, and approached the two of them.

“—U-, Um... Could it be? Could you guys be the duo from the Silver-Haired Thieving group?”

The two of them jumped in surprise at the voice from behind them.

With great passion and a shrill, excited voice, I introduced myself.

I proceeded to ask the two — who showed forced, twitching smiles — something I had been curious about for a while now.

“Did you two infiltrate the royal castle in order to protect the princess—sama from the dangerous divine instrument!?”

In response to my question— —

“

Ah-, Yes. Our calling is as chivalrous thieves, and we are the ally of the masses. Even if it is the princess, we will not turn our eyes from a young girl exposed to danger. If there is a crisis that beckons us, it makes no difference whether it is a noble’s mansion or a royal castle, we will infiltrate it. That is the mission of the Masked Thieving Group

”

There were some small differences, but this person valiantly declared her intentions nonetheless.

“

Megumin was it? Actually, we’re going to steal a certain thing from the mansion while the occupants are asleep. It is something that is necessary for the future of humanity. Though thieving is not praiseworthy behavior, but for us, this is something that we must do, even if a bounty is put on our heads.

”

I could feel his spirit being hidden within.

For some reason, I feel a sense of deja vu when I look into his one unconcealed eye.

I averted my gaze from his eyes, and continued to listen to them.

“

From here, we will infiltrate this mansion, and steal something that will be an important trump-card to use against the demon king army. We wouldn't stop you from spreading this information..., but I would like your trust, this is for the sake of humanity after all.

”

Basically, the two of them – despite the large bounties on their lives – were working hard for the sake of the world. In order to defeat the demon king army, they made all of humanity their enemies, and faithfully continued their activities.

Without a care for what they had done; Without a care for what they were about to do—

As if they had been best friends for the longest time, they shared a cheerful atmosphere.

Seeing their moods, my chest began to ache for some reason.

Then, I bid the two of them farewell.

As if I had left my heart behind, I looked back a countless number of times, and pretended to leave.

That day—

As the sole person that bore witness to their efforts, I resolved to help them from the shadows— —

Chapter 1: The Fresh and Elite Thieving Group

Part 1

There is a town named Axel.

It is a town where beginner adventurers look for companions.

It is also a place that is famous for its public security.

At the adventurer's guild of this town named Axel—

“Stop...Stoppp! What do you think you're doing!?”

—I was subjected to unfair and violent treatment.

With the request sheet I posted on the bulletin board in hand, the guild receptionist lady yelled at me:

“I'm not trying to do anything! This is a bulletin board intended for use by adventurers to gather party members. If you're looking for people to play with please do so somewhere else!”

“Looking for people to play with? How rude of you! I'm actually looking for companions, so if you have any complaints about it, let's hear it!”

The beautiful receptionist lady – whose big breasts lavishly stuck out of her chest – turned and lashed out at me.

“I'm sorry that I thought that you were playing around! Then, my complaint isn't about the place where you put this, but the conditions of the recruitment!”

The receptionist lady pulled out the sheet, and began to recite its contents.

“Searching for those with the thief profession. For the sake of justice, we will resort to criminal methods. Limited to those who are strongly motivated. Our primary tasks include assaulting nobles...”

The onlooking adventurers that heard what she said, looked at me as if I was some pitiable child.

“...Well I guess there’s no other way. Originally, I was gonna limit this to thief professions only, but I wouldn’t mind if they had other professions. So, let me change this.”

“That’s not the problem! I’m talking about the fact that you are using the guild’s bulletin board to search for companions in criminal activities!”

—That was something that happened back when I went to the Eris Thanksgiving Festival.

During that festival, I managed to meet the thieving group that I admired so much.

The silver-haired boss of the thieving group, whose mouth was covered by a cloth;

And the handsome masked mystery man, whom I’ve feel like I’ve seen before.

The silver-haired person that was called boss was fine person, anyhow, I liked her energetic mood and honest attitude.

The problem was the masked man.

That person wore a replica of Vanir’s mask... Well, it’s not like I care about how others think, but I can’t help but feel a sense of security when I’m around him, even though that was the first time we’ve met.

There was also that mask that symbolized the righteous duty of the thieving group.

—I was lovestruck.

Someone who could excite my heartstrings to this extent was definitely not an ordinary person.

In all honesty, I wanted to join them, but regrettably, I don’t have the skills of a thief.

“—Well then, as one of their fans, I decided to establish a sub-group to their thieving group. My idea was to gather people that would help them with their activities of justice.”

“Just so you know, if you’re going to form that kind of idiot group, you’re

going to have a bounty placed on you.”

The receptionist lady confiscated my recruitment poster, and disappeared to the interior of the guild.

If I can't put up a poster, I guess I have no choice but to personally scout for people. However, the people who overheard the conversation clearly didn't see eye-to-eye with me.

I approached an onii-san nearby who seemed to have the thief profession. In order to lower his guard, I showed him the best smile that I could muster.

“The idling onii-san over there, do you have a moment?”

“Sorry, I'm busy counting the number of wood grains on this table, so come look for me later ok?”

The onii-san that deliberately began to count the grains on the table. He seemed to have grasped what I was thinking.

“Even though you were idle until a moment ago... Is there anything wrong with what I said!?”

“Please stop, just don't involve me in your things! Why does it have to be me anyway!? If you're looking for someone you can to conveniently use, don't you already have that person!? That person has thief skills doesn't he!?”

“Of course I already asked that man. He told me that ‘If it was a slightly cooler season, I'll play around with you all you want’. For some reason, he doesn't think I'm serious when I say that I want to create a supporting organization for that thieving group.”

“Well you're trying to support a thieving group that has a bounty placed on them, of course he's gonna think that you're joking around.”

Offended by the onii-san's response, I vigorously slammed the table.

“Even if people like you talk badly of them, that thieving group has been working day and night for the sake of humanity! Despite that, it seems like I'll first need have to have a word with you over here!”

“Please just stop already, I don't want to hear about that! And I don't want to be related in any way shape or form with you either! Here, I'll give you these

peanut snacks so please just go bother someone else instead!”

...What is happening?

Does this mean that if I want to help the person I admire, I need to first resolve the misunderstanding of the masses first...?

As I looked around me, I put spread the peanuts on the palm of my hand, fed them into my mouth, and began to crunch on them.

As I thought, amongst the gazes that were averted from me, there was one that was strongly attached to my back.

When I turned to match the gaze, the owner frantically and ashamedly cast their head downward. Then, the owner turned their pupils upwards, as if expecting something from me.

.....

“The onee-san over there that seems to be a thief, do you have a moment?”

“Hey Megumin, you saw me didn’t you!?”

The nearby onee-san turned to face me, and at the same time, the owner of the gaze, Yunyun, frantically rose from her seat.

“Well, you didn’t call out to me whatsoever. All you did was give me this gloomy gaze that said ‘I want your attention’! If you have something you want to say then isn’t it fine to just say it!?”

“Stop! I understand, so stop pulling on my hair already!”

I grabbed onto Yunyun, who – as usual – was being annoying. Despite that, her expression was full of resolve.”

“I don’t know what you’re planning to do, but I want to be one of your companions, I think...”

Yunyun, who recently became involved with a bunch of weird people, said what she wanted to with unusual vigor.

Did the child who got involved with strange people finally grow up?

However...

“What are you saying Yunyun, aren’t you already the vice-leader of my thieving group? I already have you listed on the roster.”

“What, but I haven’t heard anything about this! Wait, so when you raised your voice just now, you were trying to solicit people for this shady group!?”

Yunyun, who raised her voice in surprise, began to lash out at me without regard for what I thought.

“What do you mean by ‘shady group’!? We will perform righteous and just thieving activities. We will be a thieving group that exists for the sake of the people!”

“I don’t understand what you’re saying! As expected, I have a bad feeling about this, so stop this already!”

As Yunyun and I were arguing, the onee-san that I called out to had frantically rushed out of the guild.

Before Yunyun could get away as well, I grabbed her tightly by the arm.

“Why does this Crimson Magic clansman wannabe look so scared!? Geez, it’s because you caused this mess that everyone is cautious of us now. Come on, don’t whine about every little thing, let’s go search for some group members already! If we get more members, that means you have more companions. Now, let’s go increase your friends!”

“Like I said, if you think I would do anything for the sake of making friends, you’re wrong—!”

Part 2

“—Hey, what about that person over there? He looks like he’ll become a thief someday.”

“Shhhh Megumin, you’re being too loud! That oji-san’s just has a scary expression, and he’s also not an adventurer, just an ordinary person you know!? By the way, what about those people over there who are about the same age as I am...”

“Aren’t they just ordinary people? Just to remind you, we’re looking for group members, not friends alright?”

On the main streets of Axel—

I sat on a bench with Yunyun, who had joined me without me having to say another word; and observed the people who passed by.

If we found anyone that we thought was suitable for the task, we would immediately scout them.

However, since Yunyun and I had differing opinions, we have yet to call out to anyone.

“Ah, what about that girl over there? I can’t see her face because of the hood of her robes, but she doesn’t seem to be that much older than us. Since she’s carrying a sword, she shouldn’t be an ordinary person either, right?”

Yunyun pointed to a short girl who wore an unfashionable robe.

I can’t really see her hair, but the eyes that peeked out of her hood were clear blue...

“Wait a second, why is that girl alone in this town?”

“W-, What’s up Megumin? Do you know that girl?”

As the hooded girl walked through the streets of the town, she – with a deep sense of interest – rapidly turned her head thru and thro, back and forth, here and there. She seemed to be dizzy from all her turning around.

Then, the oji-san of the barbeque skewer store called out to her.

“The little lady over there, how ‘bout a skewer? Since you’re so cute, I’ll charge you a tad less. So how ‘bout one skewer for a hundred thousand eris?”

“Barbeque skewers... This is a food I haven’t seen before. Did you say one hundred thousand eris? Then, would three of these suffice?”

The oji-san entered a state of shock as the girl pulled out her purse...

“What do you think you’re doing!? You can’t just spend money like that!”

“Eh-!? Ah! You are Megumin-san!”

The young girl that took out extremely valuable coins from her purse with an expression of ‘Of course this is normal!’, was none other than princess Iris. She presented the coins, and the store owner quickly took it from her hands.

Ignoring the store owner who stared in shock at the value of the coins in his hand, I lectured Iris.

“When the oji-san said one hundred-thousand eris, he was just joking. What he really means is one hundred eris. You wouldn’t find any barbecue skewers worth one hundred thousand eris anywhere.”

“I-, Is that so? I didn’t know the standard, so...”

Then, with the best honest expression he could muster, the stall owner presented the skewers.

“Nope, one skewers is actually a hundred thousand eris, but this little lady is so cute I’ll sell three for a hundred thousand.”

“Is that truly fine for you? Thank you very much!”

“Don’t believe him so easily! The oji-san is just trying to trick you since you don’t know anything about the world! Come on, it’s three hundred eris in total! If you really feel like fooling this ignorant girl, then fight me first!!”

—After purchasing the skewers for the normal price, we walked to the nearby park.

“Ah Geez, why are you here alone? What happened to your guardians?”

Before I could ask, Iris was happily munching on the skewer.

I’m not sure if this was her first time eating commoner foods or something, but her cheeks seemed to loosen in glee.

“What do you mean by ‘guardians’? My name is Alice, would you be mistaking me for someone else? ...By the way, this skewer is quite delicious. This might be the first time I’ve eaten something so mildly warm as well... If you’d like, please take one.”

In an innocent manner, she offered the skewers. Though, it was obvious to me that she was simply playing dumb.

Anyhow, it seems that she is using the alias of ‘Alice’.

I took a skewer from her hand and said:

“Haa... Well then, what is Alice-sama doing in such a place? Though the

security of this town is pretty good, you never know when a mistake will occur you know?”

“Please stop calling me Alice-sama, just call me Alice. ...Fufu, actually, I came to this town to play the other day, and though I wasn’t able to meet onii-sama, I was able to meet an interesting person... I learned that there are a lot of strange people in this world, and so I came again to study society in depth.”

Hearing the contents of her speech, I sprayed the chewed remains of the skewer across the floor.

Wasn’t the capital in trouble right now?

“Now now, the one over there, please help yourself to one as well.”

“Ah-, thank you very much Alice-chan! Uhm, please call me Yunyun. ...Hey Megumin, this girl has blonde-hair and blue-eyes... could she be some noble lady?”

Yunyun reservedly received the skewer from Iris, and timidly took a bite.

“No, I am merely the granddaughter of the capital’s chirimendonya store owner, Alice. I am not anyone of the likes of a noble lady.”

I don’t know who or what she was influenced by, but Iris was saying some strange things.

“Well, if you insist then let’s leave it like that... But this is a bit troubling isn’t it... Since we found you here... Even if we decide to leave you alone...”

If we just so happened to find the princess of a nation walking around alone, we couldn’t just leave her alone, could we...?

While I began to feel troubled by this newfound problem, Iris took another bite from her skewer.

“By the way, what were the two of you doing?”

Faced with Iris’ nonchalant question, I hesitated to tell her the truth. Though it was only for a fleeting moment.

After all, there was no way that this girl carried any ill feelings towards that thieving group.

“Actually, we were thinking about making a sub-group of the Silver-Haired Thieving Group.”

“What do you mean by that!? Please tell me in detail!”

Eh-, her response was beyond my expectations...

“No uhm, I’m trying to form a sub-group of the chivalrous Silver-Haired Thieving Group, but it’s not like I got their permission or anything. I just wanted to gather bunch of companions that would support them. That’s the kind of group I’m trying to make.”

“That sounds like fun! So are there any tests for joining this organization!?”

She had a positive reaction, as expected, but I can’t help but feel a bit doubtful. I raised my head towards her, and said:

“What, could it be that do you want to join? You can’t, after all, we don’t plan to play around. After making a secret base that will be our hideout, there are many things I must do to expand our forces. Of course, all members of the group will be put to work.”

“A secret base!”

Despite my lecturing, Iris’ eyes seemed to shine in excitement.

“U-Uhm... To add on, we’re going to be using illegal methods to punish treacherous nobles, so...”

“Punish treacherous nobles!”

Despite my continued lecturing, Iris’ eyes flared up even more.

“Please allow me! Please allow me to join as your companion!”

Somehow, the scene seemed to have tugged at Yunyun’s heartstrings, and she looked at Iris with a flushed face and raised fists.

“Hey Megumin, since she has so much spirit, wouldn’t it be fine to just let her join us? ...I-, It’s not like I’m happy that I’ll have a companion of the same age or anything alright?”

For one reason or another, Yunyun was also pushing for this girl to join the group.

On the day that someone finds out that the princess joined such a dangerous organization, will I be hanged?

Anyway, aren't the people that we're trying to punish the same people that are related to this girl?

"Well well, Yunyun, if you're going to be so assertive, I suppose I have to listen to what you say. However, Alice, since we're not playing around, I'll have you take an entrance test. Also, if you do well on the test, I'll give you the title of the 'left-hand' of my great thieving group."

"Hey Megumin, I'm just curious, but who is the 'right-hand'? I'm just a temporary member ok? You didn't make me a general or anything did you Megumin!?"

Yunyun's expression seemed to darken at my words.

Conversely, Iris' expression seemed to shine.

Part 3

—On the plains a short distance from town.

"A-Alice-chan are you alright!? In terms of size, the toads around here are quite big!"

For Iris' practical test, we were going to make her fight a giant toad. It was one of the famous monsters of this town, as well as my arch-nemesis.

"I'll be fine! The royal...I mean, the Chirimendonya clan are quite strong!"

Was Chirimendonya some special race like the Crimson Magic clan?

Facing a giant toad, Iris drew the sword from her scabbard and readied her stance.

"'Exterior'!"

As she shouted, she swung her blade without regard for distance.

Unbefitting of Iris' small frame, the luxuriously decorated longsword cut swiftly through the air—

And without so much as touching the blade, the giant toad that leaped towards Iris was cleanly sliced in half.

““Wha-!?””

As Yunyun and I shouted out in surprise, Iris – with an air of satisfaction – elegantly returned to sword to its scabbard.

“Megumin-san, how was it? Did I pass the test?”

“Eh-!? ...Uhm, this is just the first phase of the test! The giant toad you defeated just now was just a monster that any well-equipped adventurer could beat! The fact that you could kill it in one hit is a given!”

“Even though you were swallowed by said giant toad...”

As I heard such a traitorous murmur from behind me, I decided to give iris a couple more tests–

“—‘Exterior’!”

“Wait a second! What is that ‘bang, bang’ skill that you’ve been using this whole time!? Isn’t it a bit too strong!? How are you one-hit killing large monsters like one-hit bears!?”

Even though I had upped the difficulty significantly, I still can’t see Iris’ limit.

“This is a skill that is passed from generation from generation, and is a skill that only those recognized by this holy sword can use. It’s a special move that releases an intense shockwave!”

(必殺技) is literally translated to ‘sure-kill skill’, ‘shockwave’ (斬撃) is literally translated to ‘slash’>

“Could that be the hero’s legendary... N-No, actually, there’s no point in thinking too much about it.”

Royalty would marry powerful heroes, and pass on their power through the bloodline. So it wouldn’t be strange at all for this member of royalty to have a foul amount of power, but...

“If that’s the case, then that just means you have a really strong weapon. Our thieving group will be performing rough and dangerous duties, so anyone whose abilities are merely superficial are unqualified to join. What I want to see is your own power. Please display that to me.”

“Hey Megumin... isn’t Alice-chan stronger than us regardless? Can you just admit that you’re being irresponsible for what you said already?”

Yunyun tugged at my clothes while saying such irresponsible things. Anyhow, I was not in a position where I would be allowed to easily admit that.

“Well then, go and defeat those monsters over there without using your holy sword alright?”

As I dragged the fraidy Yunyun along, I pointed to the group of monsters faraway, but then I noticed...

“Wait, that’s not just goblin mob! Don’t go! Near tasty looking mobs of monsters like that, there has to be a rookie killer or some strong enemy like that...”

Despite my warning, Iris pointed her hands towards the group of goblins—!

“‘Sacred · Lightning · Blare’!”

When Iris shouted—

A flicker of pure white light shone on the goblins, and in the next instant, a white bolt of lightning was unleashed, accompanied by a fierce gale that mowed down anything and everything unfortunate enough to be caught in its path—!

Part 4

After we returned to Axel, I clapped my hands.

“Well then, that concludes the first test. I’ll admit that our newbie here is quite skilled, but my thieving group doesn’t need that much firepower. After all, just being powerful doesn’t mean you’re a great thief.

“Wait Megumin, isn’t that a bit different from what you said before! You said that we’ll be doing rough tasks. You also said that we don’t want anyone superficial abilities, but you—!”

Yunyun – who had been dumbfounded by Iris’ display of power until now – returned to her usual annoying self.

“S-Shut up, isn’t it fine that she passed the first test without any problems!?”

“You’re talking about ‘first tests’ and whatnot, but they didn’t even exist when I joined did they!? Anyway, no matter how I think about it, this girl is better—”

“S-, STOPPP! You can’t say anymore! It’s all over if you admit defeat!

To be honest, I had underestimated the power of the royal family.

I heard that royalty and nobles were born with special abilities, but I couldn’t have possibly imagined that it would be to this extent.

Anyway, wouldn’t it be fine to send this girl to subjugate the demon king?

“To blow away the onlooking rookie killer at the same time... Alice-chan used some amazing magic. I mean, even as a Crimson Magic clansman, I’ve never heard of such a magic...”

“That was the royal family’s... No I mean, the chirimendonya’s magic that is passed down from generation to generation. The magic unleashes a lightning bolt by calling on holy power. It is something like the legendary hero’s original magic.”

In any case, the chrimendonya were full of mysteries.

“That aside, what will the second test be? I have confidence in my bodily capabilities, so I will take any kind of test!”

I pressed my arms against my head at the sight of Iris’ spirited attitude.

What should I do now?

If it was revealed that the royal princess joined a thieving group of her own according, I can only imagine how much trouble I’ll be in.

To be honest, I wanted to make her give up by pointing out her faults, but...

Then, Yunyun sighed, and said:

“It’s pointless to have any more physical tests, so why don’t we test her on her education and common sense and stuff like that? Well, Alice-chan seems to be well educated, so her academics should be quite good.”

“That’s it!”

Yunyun’s nonchalant chattering had given me a revelation.

The opponent I face right now is a magnificently educated princess-sama.

Of course it was pointless to test her on academics, but common sense was a different story altogether—

“Thieves don’t need to be strong in a fight, nor do they need to be brilliantly smart, the most important thing is common sense! Whether or not Alice has common sense, allow me to be the one to judge!”

“For Megumin whose common sense is the most outlandish in Axel to judge the common sense of other people...What kind of joke... Ow, ow!”

Though Iris seemed to be a bit troubled when I started pulling on Yunyun’s hair, she gripped her fists determinedly and said:

“I-It’s fine! I’ve snuck to this town once before, so I’m sure that my body remembers some of the common sense of this town! So please start this exam!”

—About the results, well, it was terrible.

“That’s not how you eat that little lady. Peel the skin first, then eat the insides.”

We had gone to the shopping street to buy some relevant things, and the events that followed made it seem that it was the first time that that Iris had seen a piece of unpeeled fruit. She had bought a mango moment ago, and proceeded to bite into it without peeling the skin. Currently, she stood still in the middle of the street.

The store owner stared curiously at Iris, whose face turned red in embarrassment.

Geez, this is why this little princess-sama that doesn’t know a thing about the ways of the masses is...

“Well it can’t be helped, after all, until now, all the fruit you’ve eaten had all been beautifully peeled and gracefully served on a shining silver platter right? Now then, allow me to teach you some common sense. When it comes to fruits, after you peel the fruit and eat the contents inside, you fry the seeds and eat those, and then boil the skin and eat that as well.”

“You’re abnormal too Megumin! Normally you just throw the skin and seeds away!”

Yunyun’s unexpected straight-man-act, caused my treasured foundations of common sense to suddenly fall apart.

“T-That’s not possible is it? I mean, if you fry sunflower seeds until they’re parched, they’re quite tasty, and if you boil the skin you can eat that as well! Well, Yunyun was always the most abnormal person back at the village. Geez, this is why this girl without common sense is...”

“Hey stop for a second! Between the three of us, I’m obviously the one with the most common sense! And wait-, Alice-chan, you can’t eat before you pay!”

“E-Excuse my manners! The people around me always rush to pay for me, so...!”

Now that my weaknesses have been revealed in such an unexpected manner, so I can’t allow this test to go on any further.

Hmpf, from a fighting perspective and a talent perspective, she’s definitely beyond capable, but...

“Hey Megumin, I don’t know what you’re trying to do over there, but isn’t it about to stop messing around and just let Alice-chan join already? Uhm, if I can’t make any companions, then I’ll feel a bit heartbroken...”

“Yunyun, please stop talking about such severe things! I understand already. The test will be postponed to a later date, and Alice will join a provisional group for now. However Alice, should the people around you find out about this, even I have no idea what they’ll say alright?”

I stopped Yunyun from convincing me any further, and came to this compromise. In any case, Iris expression visibly brightened up.

“So in conclusion, you, who are now part of the provisional group are the lowest ranking amongst us. Thus, from now on, be sure to follow I, your leader’s instructions ok?”

Yunyun, who had listened intently to what I announced, showed an expression of sudden realization.

“By the way, why and when did Megumin become the leader? It’s not like I want to be the leader or anything, but as Megumin’s rival, if I become her subordinate of my own accord, it’s as if I’ve already lost to her. So I’d rather not.”

“This child is saying such annoying things again isn’t she? Anyway, isn’t that obvious? I’m the strongest and most mature in the group, so isn’t there no other choice but for me to take care of the rest of you guys?”

It seems that my two subordinates didn’t quite understand what I said, and they both showed subtle changes in expressions.

“Royalt...Chirimendonya are strong you know? If you want to say that, then why don’t you fight me first!?”

“Fighting...hah..., that might be a bit difficult, but if were talking about who the most mature person is, then shouldn’t that person be me? I mean, I have common sense, and I’m also the tallest one here.”

Witnessing my subordinates bring up such annoying topics, I could only shake my head, and muttered ‘my my’ under my breath.”

“Of course, if you want to take this seriously, then both are you are truly children. Either way, it’s evident that I’m the most mature one amongst us, after all...”

Then, I clapped my hands and announced:

“I asked to man to come to my room to play tonight.”

I revealed the fact that, just the other day, I had made a promise with that person...

““Ehhhhh!?””

“Wha-!? W-What are you trying to do! Stop! Stoppp! Please get off me! Stop pulling on my robes!”

“What do you mean by that Megumin!? By that man you mean Kazuma-san right!? D-D-, Did you cross the line!?”

“Y-Y-, You seduced onii-sama to come to your room!? Uhm, to onii-sama, who would blindly follow anyone who tries to seduce him!? Megumin-san isn’t a

proper lady yet, so as onii-sama's little sister, I can't turn a blind eye to this kind of rotten relationship!"

I pushed away the two who had grasped onto me, and straightened my – now messy – robes.

"I'm already of marriageable age. Also, if I remember correctly, I've entered the bath, and even slept together with that man before. Anyway, we're a young man and woman living under the same roof, so is it really that strange for this to have happened?"

Towards my pale-faced subordinates, who had listened to my announcement I said:

"So, is there anyone who objects to me being the leader?"

Part 5

After clearly drawing the line between me and them, we travelled to our original destination, but—

"The great Megumin would like that much. Can you do this much?"

"No."

The owner of the real estate shop rejected me immediately.

"What about this deal are you not satisfied about!? Even though I've defeated numerous demon king army generals, do you still not trust me!? There are no other magicians in the world that are as recognized and valuable as me you know!?"

"I don't care about that! No is no! You don't even have the money to pay the collateral fee, and you say that you want to buy the largest building in the entire town! How shameless are you!? While it's true that your party has a lot of achievements, I know better than to choose a party that was nominated as 'most likely to wipe'!"

"W-What! Who and where is this person who gave us such an unfair and baseless evaluation!?"

We had come all the way to the real estate shop in Axel in order to purchase a place to use as our hideout, but as you can see, I am being treated harshly.

“Anyway, a deposit of thirty thousand eris is not enough. You know, I’ve been in this business for a while now, but this is the first time that someone has asked me to hand over the best building in town for so little money.”

“Kuh... I guess there’s no way. I was saving this precious thing for an emergency situation but...”

I placed a ten thousand eris bill on the table. In response the owner extended his hand, and flicked the bill off the table.

“You imbecile! What are you doing to my precious thing!”

“It doesn’t matter if it’s thirty thousand or forty thousand eris! It’s not enough either way! Please just go home already!”

And then—

I could feel someone pulling on my mantle, as if trying to get me to leave.

“Hey Megumin, aren’t you being a bit unreasonable? Also, you were actually serious when you said you were making a secret base and hideout huh... Um, I agree that there should be a place where we can gather with our friends, but let’s just go home for today, and come again when we have money.”

Knowing I had no choice but to accept what Yunyun said, I gritted my teeth in frustration.

“Ah... How much money would we have to borrow to buy the biggest building in this town?”

Iris poked her head out from behind us, and timidly asked the owner.

“If you’re talking about the biggest estate in town then... Well you’ll have to pay installments of two million eris a month, as well as a five million eris upfront deposit.”

Five million...

Yunyun and I softly pushed towards the owner.

“I’ll give you the right to have this girl call you ‘oji-sama’ everyday, so can’t you lower the price a little bit?”

“Why do I have to do that kind of thing!?”

Yunyun put her hands around my neck and began to strangle me.

As I was about to reverse this situation, Iris tapped my back.

“What is it Alice? I’m in the middle of an important negotiation, so...”

Then, as if to tell us to stop, she took a deep breath.

“Uhm, would this be enough money?”

Iris took out an eris bill of tremendous value.

Seeing the bill, the owner stopped moving entirely.

Yunyun stopped strangling me, and her face began to twitch in an excessive fashion.

“...U-, Uh, this is more than enough, but to buy an estate, I’ll need to see your personal identification, as well as a guarantor for your purchase...”

Faced with the owner’s apologetic demeanor, Iris showed a troubled expression.

“Uhm, would this count as personal identification?”

As she said that, she pulled out the pendant that was hidden under her robes. That was...

“Please excuse my behavior! Your highness may buy as many buildings as you wish! Of course, the payment is fine as well! I will go retrieve the key to the estate now, so please wait here for a moment!”

Before we could reply, the owner had already rushed into the interior of the store.

“...Hey, is Alice-chan actually the child of some amazing family?”

“...She’s just an underling of our thieving group.”

“Yes, I’m just an underling!”

For some reason, Iris happy to be called an underling. On the other hand, Yunyun’s expression was nothing short of miasmic.

“But, based on that oji-san’s change in attitude, she has to be the child of some famous family right? ...Hey Megumin, was it really fine for us to involve

Alice-chan in our idiotic game? Could we have done something we really shouldn't have done?"

It was already too late for Yunyun – whose lips twitched furiously – to realize the graveness of this situation.

"I'm sorry for my lateness, here is the key! ...Please. This real estate store shall welcome your patronage at any time, and forever to come!"

Said the owner as he flew back to the storefront. His face was drenched with sweat, and his stiff smile was twitching intensely.

"...Hey Megumin, if we cause anymore trouble for the police, I won't be able to face the people at the village..."

"It's fine, all we need to do is protect Alice. Nothing more, and nothing less. Understood?"

Part 6

Near the center of Axel, on the best plot of land, was a large mansion.

The size of the structure made the mansion that I lived in feel like an ordinary house. Anyway, from today onwards, this will be our hideout.

As Yunyun and I looked up at the massive mansion, we whispered to each other:

"...I suppose we must decide the name of our thieving group first. Then, how about we called ourselves the Axel Branch?"

"Hey Megumin, are you sure you're not thinking on the wrong scale? At first, I thought we were just playing around. It'll be scary if our activities go any further, so..."

To be honest, I was getting impatient since things weren't going according to plan, but I tell her that.

Anyhow, the fact that the town's greatest mansion had fallen into our hands on the day of the groups' establishment was already beyond my plans.

"Wow what a big mansion! It might even be bigger than my father's villa!"

As I glanced at 'Alice', who displayed her warped conception of this mansion, I

opened the entrance door.

Like the mansion that had become my home, the first room was a large living room. Well, perhaps noble mansions tended to have the same sort of architecture.

Though the mansion had been maintained in an excellent condition by the real estate store, it was lacking the important furniture. The only furniture in the room was a large sofa and table.

I threw myself onto the sofa, and lazily laid down.

Then, I announced:

“As of today, this is officially our hideout. From now on, we can come here when we’re discussing our plots, planning our activities, or if we just have too much free time. Well, basically, this is a place where we can gather in. Each of you can come get a key alright?”

When I said that this was a place to gather, Yunyun’s eyes began to shine, and she showed a happy expression. On the other hand, Iris seemed happy and with a wide smile, she jumped onto the sofa without regard for her etiquette.

Then, Yunyun – with a silly smile of her face – seated herself on one end of the sofa. Fixing my posture, I said:

“We somehow managed to easily obtain this hideout, but I suppose that connections can also be called a talent. If it’s something we can use, we should use it without any regrets... Now then—”

I put my hand on the table.

“Now that that’s settled, let’s discuss the future of my thieving group.”

After my introductory remark, I began to explain to the two—

“—And that is everything you need to know. They are not doing this for our own benefit, rather, they are chivalrous thieves that are the ally of the masses. To them, it doesn’t matter if they criminals, or have great bounties hung on our heads, they will continue to do what they do for the sake of the world, for the sake of humanity! Even if no one witnesses what their righteous acts, even if no one understands what they do, even then, they continue to fight!”

“Amazing...! What kind of virtue could they possibly have...? Megumin, I’ve decided! Though I was trying to back out from pointless game a moment ago, from now on, I will do my best alongside you!”

I was slightly curious of what she meant by ‘pointless game’, but since she was motivated now, I suppose I’ll let it be.

Then, I noticed Iris’ trembling stature. She had been silent all this time.

“I-, I....”

“Alice? What happened? Your face is flushed and your eyes are wet...”

As if she hadn’t heard what I pointed out, Iris slammed the table and rose from her seat.”

“I will go to my father right now. If there’s a chance that I can get the bounty of that thieving group lifted, I don’t mind saying selfish things to my father! If that doesn’t work, I will go to onii-sama and get him to spoil me!”

“What is this girl saying all of a sudden!? The part about the bounty is fine, but why do you need that man to spoil you!”

Consider the flow of our discussion, how did we ever get to this topic?

,

Even if it is the princess, we will not turn our eyes from a young girl exposed to danger. If there is a crisis that beckons us, it makes no difference whether it is a noble’s mansion or a royal castle, we will infiltrate it. That is the mission of the Masked Thieving Group

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Even though that was what the masked man had taught me that the last time we met...

“More importantly, we need to discuss our future plans. As of now, we’re only three people. Not to mention, the three of us are still relatively young. For now, let’s focus on expanding our reach and increasing our numbers. Of course, don’t take this task lightly. To add on, if we recruit some more tough and capable members and improve our reputation, we’ll soon be able to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Silver-Haired Thieving Group!”

“Tough and capable members huh... Those people are more like outlaws than thieves, not to mention that nothing good will ever come out of them...”

As Yunyun mumbled to herself, Iris crossed her arms with a troubled expression.

“Uhm, Megumin-san. The last time I came to this town, I managed to meet a superbly magnificent person. Should I invite him to this group?”

“A superbly magnificent person you say? I don’t know about what happened when you came to this town last time, so could you please tell me more about this person?”

Iris returned a small nod in response to my inquiry.

“That person is called Hachibei. During the day that I spent with that person, he had assumed the role of a foolish mood-maker, and had showered me with thoughtless praise. As long as there is a sufficient reward, he will will help with anything.”

“That’s enough Alice, you must cut your ties with that person immediately! What I seek is someone who can sing and dance at the same time! That’s the kind of amusing person I am looking for!”

Well, since we were just established today, there’s no hurry to increase our numbers right?

I shifted my focus to my original plans:

“The two of you, please turn your attention here for a moment. Let’s talk about our plans for tonight.”

As I said that, I spread a map of the town across the table—

Part 7

At the villa of a certain noble—

Our gazes were fixated onto the guards stationed at the front gate.

“—Hey Megumin, I’ve meant to ask you for a while now, but are you an idiot? What happened to you? Weren’t you the top student back at the village?”

Ignoring Yunyun, who continued to pester me about the same thing over and

over again, I continued observing the exterior of the mansion.

“Hmm, if there’s only this many guards, and if the mansion is this big... Then with my explosion magic I can take them all out in one go right?”

“Hey Megumin, forget about what I said, you’re clearly one of the top idiots of the Crimson Magic clan!”

Since we can’t allow ourselves to draw the attention of the guards, I hurriedly covered Yunyun’s blabbering mouth.

Iris lightly tugged on my mantle. When I turned to face her, she carried a bewildered expression.

“Uhm, Megumin-san...? I don’t know much about the common sense of the world, but I’m certain that this is something we can’t and shouldn’t do. At the very least, if there isn’t any evidence...”

In order to comfort Iris, I showed a confident smile and declared:

“Everything will be fine Alice. The Crimson Magic clan, who specialize in creating magic tools, have a saying: ‘Create what you don’t have’”

“Stop right there Megumin! I mean, the meaning of that phrase is different from what you meant!”

Yunyun was putting up an unexpected straight-man-act again. In order to resolve this, I turned my gaze towards the mansion, and announced:

“Everything will be fine Yunyun, after all, we have Alice. As long as we hide behind this girl’s back, we can’t be prosecuted in any way.”

“Hey, I didn’t want to force you to tell me about this, but let’s hear it! Who exactly is Alice-chan!? Could it be that we’re not actually doing what I think we’re doing!?”

Ignoring Yunyun’s incessant shouting, I targeted the space above the mansion with my magic and—!

“Ir-...! A-, Alice-sama, I’ve been looking everywhere for you!”

Then, suddenly, a teary voice came from behind us.

I quickly turned around. Behind us was woman dressed in a white suit, with a

sheathed sword at her waist.

Her eyes glistened on the verge of tears, and her breath was ragged. It seemed that she had been searching for Iris with deathly conviction.

If I remember correct, this person was called Claire, and was one of Iris' two bodyguards.

“Claire!? H-, How did you know that I would be in this town!?”

Iris exclaimed in surprise. She probably didn't think that she would be found so easily.

“How much do you think I know about you, Alice-sama? As a loyal retainer of my level, as someone who measures how much Alice-sama grows each week, as someone who counts how many times Alice-sama yawns in a day, as someone who would even measure the amount of times Alice-sama pushes green peppers to the side of her plate; of course I would see through Alice-sama's plans.”

Ah, this person is a degenerate as well.

“C-, Claire, though that is slightly disturbing, it is as I would expect of you! But to think that you would find me with such pinpoint accuracy... More importantly, Claire, Please! Just for tonight, let me stay at onii-sama's mansion —”

“I cannot allow that.”

Claire – who would not even allow such a wish – caught Iris by the wrist, pulled her in, and hugged her tightly, as to not allow her to escape.

“Let go Claire! I can't allow you to interrupt my plans for tonight! I'm going to trick onii-sama!”

“That's truly a great thing! A man like him should not only be thoroughly deceived, but also deserves to be henpecked! Now Alice-sama, please stop being selfish and think about me as well!”

(of a woman) continually criticize and give orders to (her husband or other male partner).

>

As Claire shouted such things, her face turned redder, and she tightened her hug on Iris.

“C-, Claire? I didn’t really mean to go to that extent, but first, can you loosen your grip a little?”

Despite her plea, Claire proceeded to rub her nose against Iris’ hair, and breathed in deeply with an expression of inappropriate joy.

“I cannot. This is punishment Alice-sama. For I, Claire, who cannot do these things to Alice-sama from now on, can only tighten my hug as if possessed by the devil. It is as if...Ow, ow-! P-, Please wait a moment Alice-sama! Forgive me Alice-sama! It is my fault for putting up such a foolish act, so please don’t tighten your hug any further!”

Iris, who had tightened her hug in turn, had caused inappropriate sounds to creak from Claire’s body. When Iris finally released the hug, Claire turned towards me:

“It has been a while Megumin-dono. I cannot thank you enough for protecting Alice-sama on this occasion. After we return to the capital, I suppose that I need to increase the supervision of the teleport store, so that Alice-sama will not be able to come to this town again in such a manner. Well then, I suppose it’s time to say our farewells...”

Hearing what Claire said, Iris showed cast her head downwards in defeat

Seeing Claire’s angry expression, I suppose that the situation is as I suspected. Iris had snuck out of the castle of her own accord to come to this town.

The castle’s security will be increased after this. Furthermore, if she can’t use teleport, then we wouldn’t ever get the chance to meet again due to the difference in our status.

Iris pressed herself against Claire’s back. No matter how I look at it, her downcast expression was that of a child that hadn’t had to the opportunity to play around.

“When you return to the capital, remember to keep your ears open. I’ll send you a signal someday. If you hear the signal, please come go to the front gate of the capital at sunset of the next day.”

It was like a promise to play again some other time.

“Eh-?”

Iris raised her head with a confused expression.

“Even if you are a provisional member, you are definitely a member of our thieving group. Now that you’ve joined the group, don’t think it’ll be so easy to leave alright?”

Hearing what I said, Iris expression quickly brightened up—

“Yes! Of course boss!”

And so, she exclaimed with a wide smile.

“...Alice-sama, I don’t know what you’re talking about, but we need to hurry up and leave alright? N-, No, please don’t do that Alice-sama! Even if you turn your eyes up towards me with such a cute expression—! Now, let’s hurry to the teleport room. I’m sure that Rain is crying whilst searching for you back at the capital.”

And then, Claire, together with Iris – who continued to energetically complain despite her hands being restricted – headed for the teleport store.

“And they’re gone.....”

Muttered Yunyun. As if unable to pay attention to anything else, she looked towards where they left.

“Yunyun, if I’m not wrong, you said that you learned teleport magic the other day right?”

When she heard my inquiry, Yunyun tilted her head slightly.

“Eh-? Ahh, yea... I wanted to use it to return to the village anytime, but I only learned it recently...”

“I see. Then I have something I want you to do. We’ll go to the teleport room right now. Then, once we’re brought to the capital, could you register that place as a teleport point?”

“The capital? ...Well I don’t really mind, but you’re plotting something weird again aren’t you Megumin?”

I just wanted to visit my underling whenever I wanted.

“How disrespectful of you to call it a plot. I merely want to go on an excursion somewhere faraway. It’s a pity that our plans for today didn’t work out, but we can postpone that to some other time. Now then, let’s go!”

“I did say that I don’t really mind, but why are Megumin’s eyes glowing so brightly!? I mean, I have a bad feeling about this!”

—Using the teleport store, we arrived at the front gate of the royal capital.

Well then, please go over there and register the teleport point. I have something I must do right now, so once you’re done registering please come back here.”

“I’m fine with that, but what is it that you ‘must’ do? Does it have something to do with what you said to Alice-chan?”

I turned my back towards Yunyun, who showed an uneasy expression, and walked towards a small hill a fair distance away from the gate.

Hmm, from here, the people in the capital shouldn’t be able to see me.

For the sake of my underling, I started chanting my special magic—

“Wha Megumin, what are you chanting!? You’re not planning to strike that kind of place with explosion magic are you!?”

Ignoring Yunyun, who chased after me after registering the teleport point—

“‘Explosion’——!!”

Though I was only using for its sound, I unleashed my tried and true explosion magic——!

Part 8

“—Hey Megumin, from now on I’ll call you the number one idiot of the Crimson Magic clan alright?”

“If you’re gonna call me that, I’ll call you the number one loner of the Crimson Magic clan alright?”

After returning to Axel using Yunyun’s teleport magic, I—

“...Just so you know, I’m fine with leaving you here.”

“Oi, if you leave me in an immobile state in a place where so many people pass through, I’ll never forgive you. If some pervert sees me in a state where I can’t move after using magic, what am I going to do?”

Was currently being carried home by Yunyun.

“A ‘special’ person who would do perverted things to someone like Megumin... the only person I can think of that would do that in this town is Kazuma-san...Ow ow!

Since Yunyun was saying some clearly unnecessary things, I lowered my hands from her neck, and gripped her ‘chest armor’ to my hearts content.

“Well anyway, I didn’t think it would cause such a mess.”

“Why didn’t you think it would? Well, the capital gave the demon king army attack announcement, but no matter how I look at it, it’s obvious that that was because of Megumin’s magic attack.”

“...Well, don’t you think that that was a fine debut for our elite thieving group?”

“We’re thieves not terrorists! Hey, can we disband already? I think that if we keep this up, we’re going to have a higher bounty than the silver-haired thieving group.”

That is exactly what I wish for.

“Well isn’t that fine? The people at the capital will get used to it anyway. After all, we’re going to do that every day from now on.”

“Wait a second!? But I didn’t hear about this!”

“Oh, well I guess we’re almost there huh. Well since my magic power has recovered a bit as well, it’s fine to drop me here.”

“Hey, are we going to do this again tomorrow!? Actually, I think I’d rather leave the group!”

As Yunyun’s fussy noise trailed from behind me, I headed towards the mansion—

“—I’m home~”

“Welcome home~!”

As I returned home, I was greeted by Aqua. She was diligently feeding the yellow furball than rested on her knee.

As I walked into the living room, I could hear angry shouting coming from the kitchen.

“—Like I said already, the food that your make just aren’t that tasty. To be honest, they’re just straight up plain! Since I have the cooking skill anyway, just leave this to me, and go wait over there or something!”

“—I mean I have the essence of a lady as well! If I just sit around doing nothing everyday and let a man cook, then how I can I face my retainers that have taught me how to cook since I was young! Its fine, just leave this to me. Go and lounge in the living room or something!”

It seems that they were fighting over who was cooking today.

Having been chased away from the kitchen, Kazuma entered the living room with a moody expression.

“Oh? Welcome home Megumin. Hey, hear me out alright? That girl Darkness was saying some troublesome things and—“

I said to the idiot that was sleeping on the sofa:

“Well, Kazuma, you probably said some unnecessary things...More importantly, uhm, about tonight...”

“...O-Oh, tonight is that huh. Yea, it’s that tonight.”

Kazuma got up from the couch with a flushed face.

About ‘that’, it seems that he was thinking of something else entirely.

“What is it you two, what happened? You guys look a little weird, and what is ‘that’ anyway?”

“Noth-, it’s nothing alright-!? It’s that you know? That. Oh yea, Megumin was talking this morning about how she was going to make some organization or something you know!? Anyway, how did ‘that’ turn out!?”

Kazuma, who was questioned by Aqua, feverishly tried to change the topic.

“I made a surprising amount of progress today you know? Not only did we get a hideout, I also gained two subordinates”

“I see, that sounds like fun doesn’t it? When I was a kid, I made a secret hideout to play in as well. But when the neighboring kids take over or destroy your hideout, don’t cry or attack them or anything alright?”

This man!

“What do you think I was doing all this time!? Anyway, you’ll be surprised when you see my hideout alright? After all, it’s larger than this mansion. Also, one of my new subordinates wields a holy sword, and can also legendary-rank magic, so haven’t I already made good progress for the first day of establishment? If we continue like this, it won’t be long till we can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Silver-Haired Thieving Group.”

“I see, isn’t that great~! A new friend that has a holy sword and can use legendary magic is a good fit for you right? But don’t cause too much trouble for them alright?”

Really, this man was going to act disrespectfully till bitter end.

Anyway, I should really tell this person about what happened to Iris.

...Well, there’ll be some chance to explain that in the future I guess.

Then, when I was considering what to do, Kazuma turned to face Aqua and said:

“Well that aside, oi Aqua. You can drink the expensive wine you bought today without any regrets alright? You’ve been working hard taking care of Emperor Zell all this time, so you can take a break every once in a while and drink as you like.”

“Hm? What kind of revelation did you get? I mean, you always punish for doing this and that. Have you finally opened your eyes to repent for forgiveness? Well, usually, I would gladly take this break, but I’ll pass for tonight. I promised to brainstorm with Megumin about the name of Emperor Zell’s special move for when he gets one, so I’ll drink some other time alright?”

“Hah-!? N-, No no! Can’t that wait till when Emperor Zell actually gets a special move? I mean, Megumin is tired from playing outside today, so she should go to bed earlier right? Right!?”

Kazuma raised his voice in fearful desperation.

...This person really thinks I went to play around today.

I wanted to explain in detail what happened today, but I guess I don’t have to tell him right now... He’s not a group member anyway.

I’ll tell him someday, when this thieving group becomes bigger. Someday, when I have told him about what I promised to him.

Then, someday, when this man tells me he wants to join the thieving group—

“You’re right. Since I’m tired today, I’ll go to bed after eating. Now that that’s settled, Kazuma, about what we promised, please come tomorrow instead.

“Eh-“

—I will also tell him about the day that I met that masked thief.

Notes:

- Yunyun’s ‘Hey Megumin’ and ‘but...’ are parts of her speech pattern. It’s an indication of her timid and uncertain demeanor.

Chapter 2: The Growing Thieving Group

Part 1

On the hill overlooking the capital, I once again chanted explosion magic.

“‘Explosion’——!”

The flash of light was the harbinger of the loud roar.

Accompanying the sound, the capital entered a state of commotion. Simply put, the use of magic in the vicinity caused the order in the capital to break down.

“Demon King Army alert! Demon King Army alert! All the adventurers, please gather up in front of the castle——”

I treated the announcement as somebody else’s problem, and waited there for 10 minutes.

“——We’re here——! Also, can you please stop messing around already! Are you really an idiot!? Hey, are we going to keep doing this everyday!?”

“Forgive my lateness boss. I have managed to rendezvous safely!”

Aware that she was involved in a crime, and with her face hidden underneath her hood, was Yunyun, whose eyes shined crimson in her excitement and anger.

Then, there was Iris, who carried a rucksack over her shoulder, and looked as though she was going for a picnic. They had successfully met up with me, who was resting on the hill.

“Good work you two. Uhm, could you help me up?”

“Don’t ‘good work’ me. Or would you rather I bury you like that!? Hey Megumin, do you know that the capital is in a state of emergency right now? What are you planning to do after this!?”

Iris looked down to face me, who laid on the ground. Yunyun put her hands on her hips, and began to lecture me again.

“You know, this or that? To be honest, we already know what to do in times

like these, right? A similar thing happened back at the village remember? Yea, that was a truly painful experience...”

“Y-, You, could it be...”

In the past, Yunyun and I had a similar experience.

Back then, a mysterious female devil after Chomusuke casted explosion magic at the village day and night.

There were a few differences in details, but it was that kind of incident.

“You’re going to blame it on someone else again?”

“W-, What do you mean by again!? If you’re talking about the explosion incident back at the village, that incident was undoubtedly the female devil’s doing. As for this time... ‘By the time I realized it, the demon king, who had decided to take a walk, suddenly casted explosion magic towards the capital and went home’. Go to the police station and give them this eyewitness report...”

“I’m not going to do that ok! I’m not going to give such an idiotic testimony ok!?”

As Yunyun continued to complain, Iris – going about at her own pace – lifted me up in a bridal carry.

“Uhm, I made some sweets today. There’s enough for all of us, so how about we go to a place with a nice view and sit down?”

“Hey, this girl doesn’t have any common sense either! And is she some kind of important person!?”

As Iris continued to carry me, I gave instructions to Yunyun.

“If we stay here we’ll have pursuers, so let’s go back to Axel first. After that, I think that it would be a good idea to eat our boxed lunch outside town.”

<TL Note: Boxed lunch as in ‘bento’>

“At this point, who even cares about the boxed lunch!? Ahh, that’s not what I meant Alice-chan. Could you please not give me that sad expression!? ‘Who even cares’ was just an exaggeration ok? I really want to go on a picnic with my

friends and eat a boxed lunch ok? I'm really looking forward to it ok!?"

Yunyun made a loud fuss, and the people in town seemed to have noticed our presence. I could hear shouts of 'there's someone over there' all the way from here.

"Yunyun, they found us because you were being noisy! Also, aren't you a bit too tense for something like a picnic with friends!? Geez, this is why you're a loner! Well now, just hurry up and chant teleport magic please!"

"Hey, it's my fault!? I can't agree with that ok!?"

Yunyun, who continued to be noisy at this crucial juncture, began to chant teleportation magic.

"Teleport' -!"

Grabbing onto me, she frantically casted the teleportation magic.

——Arriving at the lake near Axel, Iris happily took out the boxed lunches, and placed them on the sheets.

"Hey Alice-chan, who made these boxed lunches? Mm, they're very tasty! Uhm, they're just tasty ok, there's nothing more to that. Also, aren't the ingredients a bit too luxurious? I mean, I don't think that this is the kind of boxed lunch that we would bring to a picnic..."

"The maids that I asked: 'I want to go play with my new friends, so I want to go out in secret. Could you help me?' were really revved up, and they made these boxed lunches for us."

"Hey Alice-chan, if your family has a lot of maids, then your family should be fairly big right? If you don't mind me asking, what is a Chirimendonya? I'm really happy that you called us your new friends, but after that, you said something that I can't just ignore..."

Yunyun picked up a shark fin with her chopsticks, and gazed at it with a serious expression.

"That doesn't really matter does it? Regardless of whether it's the size of your chest, or your height, or the number of friends, or your family matters, there are things that can't be told to other people."

“You’re right, sorry about that. It’s just as Megumin said.”

Perhaps there were also things that she didn’t want me to know, but Yunyun agreed with what I said. Then, Yunyun, in a mature fashion, put away her finished boxed lunch.

After that, once I recovered enough of my magic power to eat properly, I enthusiastically dug into my own classy boxed lunch.

“Alice, you are truly quite good when it comes to food. Alright, from now on you shall be our supplies officer. In other words, you are promoted.”

“A promotion! Thank you very much, I will work hard in the future as well!”

“Alice-chan, she just wants you to bring her food from now on. Don’t let yourself be tricked!”

Once we finished eating, we walked barefoot into the lake and began to chase the fish around. Then, we played around by throwing pebbles at the surface of the lake, and taught Iris how to stone-skip. When she hit someone fishing at the other side of the lake, we went to apologize.

As we continued to play around, noontime peacefully arrived...

“I had a lot of fun today, and to be honest, I wouldn’t mind doing this every day either. Anyway, Alice-chan, if we stay here too long, your family will start to worry. Eventually they’ll come here to looking for you. So I guess it’s about time for you to go home...”

As Yunyun sorrowfully said so, Iris returned the sheets and boxed lunches to her rucksack.

“Well then, let’s go home shall we? I had a lot of fun today as well. Let’s come here for another picnic sometime!”

Walking behind the two who hummed as we walked towards Axel, I realized that...

“This is wrong! What do you mean when you say that she should go home after eating lunch! Since when did this become a picnic? Our activities are just starting!”

Yunyun showed a reluctant expression.

“Well boss, what are we going to do today?” asked Iris.

“Let’s talk about what we will do in the future. The other day, we got our hands on a hideout, and Axel has become our headquarters... We will add branches in various other places, and someday, our organization will operate throughout the entire world. In order to do that, we will need some money. So first, let us secure a steady flow of income.”

“Hey, Megumin, you’re joking when you’re talking about the entire world right? Sometimes, I don’t get if you’re joking or being serious...”

Of course I’m serious, but whatever.

More importantly...

“At the moment, our thieving group has two branches, the main branch in Axel, and the side branch in the capital. From here on out, we’ll need to start thinking of ways to expand. The hideout in the royal capital is Alice’s house. Alice, I have decided on the insignia of our thieving group, so please put this somewhere high at your home it? From today onwards you’ll be the leader of the capital side branch. I must say, this is quite a big promotion. You went from supply officer to the capital’s branch leader in one fell swoop!”

“Thank you very much, I will work harder in the future!”

“Alice-chan, don’t let yourself be tricked! She just wants to make your home her territory!”

The day that the royal castle of this nation falls into my hands is not far.

For the purpose, I must secure some funds—

Part 2

“So basically, we want some work. Ideally, we make a fortune in the long run, and also get some reputation while we’re at it. That’s all we want.”

“Uhm, how about getting a part-time job somewhere?”

We came to the adventurer’s guild to consult with the receptionist onee-chan.

Iris excitedly looked around the guild. As for me; I was given a fairly blunt

suggestion by the receptionist lady, but I wasn't discouraged.

"That's not what I was asking for. What we want is an appropriate job for the three of us. We are quite confident in our abilities you know? Thus, we would a job like 'repelling those that threaten the city' and other jobs like that..."

"Well, a security company began operating in this town the other day, but they were crushed in the blink of an eye..."

For some reason, when Yunyun heard what the receptionist lady said, she turned her eyes away.

Did she know something about the crushing of that security organization?

"Either way, I don't want to request any rough work from three girls..."

As I thought, there was a problem with how we looked.

The other day, Yunyun and I sat on the bench, and used appearances to judge whether or not someone was suitable for our group. Thinking back, it was a job well done.

"Please onee-san, it's fine even if it doesn't give us a huge fortune! The type of job we want is one that allows us to earn money while getting the gratitude of the people. If we earn their gratitude, then they'll want to join our thieving group as well! Also, if you can, please make it a subjugation-type job!"

"Hm, about requests that match that description, I don't think there are... ... ah."

The onee-san spoke in a timid voice. Perhaps she actually knew that there were requests that matched that description.

"What's the matter? So there are some? If that's the case please entrust it to us!"

"No, while the request does exist, it has already been accepted by another group... The town has requested the subjugation of giant toads at the town's landfill, but for some reason, an adventurer took the job without asking for compensation."

Giant toad subjugation.

It was true that doing this job would earn the gratitude of the people. Furthermore, for any combat-type profession, getting work from town itself was a way to get a stable income, but...

Hm, it pointless for a group composed of crimson magic clansmen and the great princess-sama to go subjugating giant toads.

Not only would it be a waste of our talent, it would be completely overkill considering our combat power.

Right?

“This request is a bit... As a proud and great crimson magic clansman, I cannot allow myself to live if I ever earn an infamous nickname such as “Giant Toad Slayer”. That aside, are there any other jobs? It doesn’t matter if the town isn’t the client, it could be a famous store, or a renowned group. So are there any stable requests that we can do?”

The onee-san looked a little troubled.

“At the moment, there are requests that match up to your requirements, but...”

——At the outskirts of Axel. We stood in front of a medium-sized church that appeared as though it had been recently renovated.

“I never thought that we would come here again...”

“Hey Megumin, can we stop? I won’t ask for any more, so could we stop this already!?”

This was the Axel branch of the Axis cult.

“It’s a well-constructed, and rather blue church isn’t it!? ...Are you two not going in?”

Perhaps Iris didn’t know about the Axis cult. When she looked up at the church, she voiced her thoughts about it without a single trace of ill intent.

“Alice, this is the base of operations for an extremely troublesome and dangerous group residing in this town. If the people involved in this group appear to be performing suspicious activities, the people in town are allowed to attack them.”

“Alice-chan, Megumin is actually right this time ok? If some weird people come flying out, don’t hold back alright?”

Hearing that warning, Iris tilted her head slightly, and pushed the church’s door open...

At the same time, the sound of something tipping over and breaking was heard.

“Ah! The expensive vase that is rumored to bring happiness to those that possess it that I placed in front of the door! That means you’re a scoundrel that stole away my happiness yes!? Please take responsibility by choosing from the following: To support me for life, to provide compensation, or to join the Axis cult as a devout believer... Huh, Megumin-san and Yunyun-san?”

The priest who had been rattling with high tension a second ago, looked at us with a blank expression.

“Uhm, I came to do the request from the guild... but... is it fine if I go home instead?”

Hearing what I said, Cecily’s expression shined in enthusiasm.

“—Uhm, are you really alright without compensation? If that vase had the power to bestow happiness, then it should have been a fairly expensive magic tool...”

Cecily, who saw Iris’ guilty expression, was moved to tears, and she joined her hands as if she was praying.

...Rather, she was actually praying.

“Ahhhh-, thank you for your grace Aqua-sama! To think that you would bestow me with such an innocent loli child...!”

It seemed that Cecily, who hadn’t paid attention to what I said about the request, was in her best form today too.

Looking back, we might’ve been better off just going home.

“Alice, it is onee-san’s fault for putting this vase in front of the door, so please don’t worry about it. Actually, I was just waiting for someone to open the door and break it. The purpose was to make the one who broke it feel troubled, and

force them to pay a high compensation or force them into the Axis cult.”

Cecily explained what she did to Iris, who showed a worrying and troubled expression.

Then, for some reason, Iris showed a gaze of respect towards Cecily.

“To use this kind of method to earn money and increase your believers. I would’ve never thought that was the case! Cecily-san, you’re quite a clever person aren’t you!?”

“Alice-chan, that’s not something you should feel moved by! What Cecily-san is doing is almost a crime you know!?”

I don’t think that was just ‘almost’ a crime.

“It is as Alice-san says. I serve as a distinguished figure of this church, and am none other than the beautiful priest of the Axis cult, Cecily! Please feel free to call me Cecily-onee-chan ok?”

“Yes, I am in your care Cecily-onee-chan. I am Alice.”

Having been called ‘Cecily-onee-chan’ in such a forthcoming manner by Iris, Cecily began to pant heavily and hurriedly.

“Hey Megumin, am I going to die tomorrow? Did I use up my entire life’s worth of happiness today?”

“Is that all it takes for you to be satisfied with your life? Also, Alice, this onee-san is mentally unstable, so please keep ‘onee-chan’ to a minimum.”

“Ah, I-, I understand.”

“Ah-, why!”

Cecily seemed to be shocked. Hmm... Anyway, since the conversation wouldn’t continue any further like this, I should forcefully change the topic.

“Then, back to what we came here for... We came to perform a request from the guild. Could you tell us the details about the request?”

I showed the request form to Cecily, who sat on the floor with her arms wrapped around her knees.

Part 3

“Now then, let’s talk about the request. Well, it’s not really that hard of a request; the details are the same as what’s written on the form.”

We received two requests from the guild.

The first was ‘to investigate the suspicious people that have been appearing near the church, and to deter them from it’.

The other was a recruitment request for salesgirls, who would help secure income for the church.

The identification of the suspicious person aside, being a salesgirl for the church was a deliciously easy job.

It simply involved coming here regularly over the course of the month, and showing my face for a couple hours each time.

Just by doing that, I would get a share of the increased sales.

I don’t know what they were selling, but these conditions were truly exceptional.

“The salesgirl request is easy so I don’t really mind. Anyway, about the other request...”

As I asked, Cecily pushed her finger against her cheek, and showed a troubled expression.

“It’s something that started happening recently, but...”

According to Cecily’s explanation, the vegetables that were being grown in the church’s garden were being eaten, and the food in the refrigerator, stolen.

Furthermore, the culprit hadn’t made any noticeable sounds in the process, and by the time Cecily had noticed, all the food was already gone. When she asked the people in the area, all of them replied that they hadn’t seen any suspicious or strange people.

“About the vegetable thief and the refrigerator robber, I don’t understand their objective at all. If the objective was to steal food, then there shouldn’t be a reason to come to a dangerous place like this. I mean, if they’re caught here, who knows what will happen to them? Based on that fact, there are many safer places to steal food from.”

“Hey Megumin, I don’t think the Axis cult are as vicious or hated to the extent that you think they are...”

While I was racking my head trying to deduce the objective of the culprits, Yunyun timidly opened her mouth.

“Megumin, do you think that this could be the result of some grudge? Like say, the people who were given a hard time by the Axis cult are coming for revenge...?”

“A grudge huh... Onee-san, have you done anything that would make people hate you? It doesn’t matter how minor the incident is, please tell us.”

Hearing what I said, Cecily turned her head towards the roof. It seems like something was weighing on her mind.

“...I’m not sure.”

Saying that, she shook her head.

Due to the prejudice towards the Axis cult, there was no way that a priest of the Axis cult would not be subject to hate. Perhaps I did say something disrespectful towards her.

“I see. Sorry, I asked a weird question. Anyhow, the fact that we don’t know anything about the culprit is troublesome, but maybe there’s some misunderstanding or something that we don’t know about...”

“Mm, you’re mistaken. To call it something to hate me over is a bit excessive, and I can’t tell you about the specifics, but...”

“I’m disappointed! Please return my apology! What exactly are you guilty of? Go and apologize to all the people who are involved right now!”

As I thought, Cecily is just Cecily.

“Still, isn’t it kind of strange that despite the frequency of thefts, we still don’t have a single sighting or eyewitness? Cecily-san, is there are certain time during which the thefts take place?”

“Even if you ask that, by the time I notice, everything’s already gone, so...”

Yunyun turned towards Cecily, who seemed to be troubled by her question.

“Onee-san, how about working together with your neighbors? For example, if you’re going to do some unnecessary thing again, why not get your neighbors to be your accomplices?”

“As I thought, associating with my neighbors is important isn’t it? Actually, a while back, I ran into a neighbor in town, and caused some trouble. By the end of it, I was almost kicked out of town.”

Ah, what will I do with this person.

“Anyway, there are an infinite amount of suspects if we don’t have any clues, so let’s leave that aside for now. Now then, could I first ask what we’ll be selling as salesgirls?”

Hearing that, Cecily happily ran to the storage room, and came out with carrying a large crate of something.

Inside that crate was a large amount of white power.

“...Uhm, onee-san, is this what I think it is...”

Before I could ask in detail, Cecily raised her finger to stop me.

“Shh! Megumin-san, you’re not allowed to say anymore. This is just something that brings happiness if you put it inside your mouth. It’s nothing more, and nothing less ok?”

“EEhhhh-!?”

Hearing that, Yunyun shouted in surprise. On the other hand, Iris tilted her head.”

“Onee-san, isn’t this illegal? If he finds out he’ll be scold me again you know?”

“Again!? So there was a previous case!?”

Iris’ eyebrows raised in surprise at the mention of illegal goods.

“Fufu, it’ll be alright Megumin-san. This isn’t ‘that’ illegal good. It’s a heavily modified version of ‘that’ that hasn’t been banned yet. We’ve also confirmed that it doesn’t bring harm to the human body. Uhehehehe, if the people in town learn about this, they won’t be able to control themselves!”

“-!”

Cecily showed a weird smile on her face, and Yunyun drew her wand from her waist.

She pointed it towards Cecily, and appealed to her with a sorrowful expression.

“Cecily-san, your personality and behavior is a bit weird, but I believe that you aren’t the kind of person who would do this kind of thing! It’s not like I don’t know what kind of person you are, so I will do everything I can to turn you back on the right path!”

Yunyun seemed to have a huge misunderstanding.

Following Yunyun, Iris drew her sword from her scabbard.

“Regardless of what this is, anything that is designated as an illegal good will do nothing but bring harm to this nation. Now that I have heard about this ‘special and modified good’, I cannot allow myself to overlook this.”

“Wait you two, why are you looking at onee-chan so intently!? I apologize if I did something wrong, and if you want I can even share some with you!”

Towards the sudden turn of events, Cecily began to panic.

“For you to try and offer us such a thing... Could it be that you... You offered this to Megumin as well haven’t you?”

“Eh-!? ...O-, Of course I did, after all, I want her to partake in the wonderfulness of this...”

Yunyun eyes began to shine bright crimson.

Hmm, I can’t help but feel like this has happened before.

“Wait! Can you please listen to what onee-chan has to say!? I think there’s some misunderstanding!”

The two continued to inch towards her step-by-step, weapons in hand.

“Well, I think you guys are misunderstanding something. This is just a luxury good – Tokoroten Slime – In powdered form. Due to how often the children and the elderly were choking on it, it was banned from the market.”

““Eh.””

The two stopped in their tracks.

“sniff, sniff... This is just a new version that the elderly won’t choke on...”

Cecily, who began to sniffle and cry, exchanged glances with the two libelers.

Part 4

“—Geez! Onee-san won’t deal with that kind of suspicious powder alright!? Despite how I look, I’m still a clergyman you know?”

““We’re very sorry!””

With their positions reversed, Cecily was now lecturing the two who asked for her forgiveness.

Though, I didn’t think it was appropriate for Cecily to continuously return to the topic of the powder.

“This is a special product that I have invested a lot of my time to modify and create. In this powdered form, the people won’t choke on it. However, if we sell it under the name of ‘Tokoroten Slime’, the police will probably come and shut our business down. Therefore, why don’t we sell it under the name of ‘The Axis Cult’s White Powder’?”

“I think the police will definitely come if we use that name.”

The discussion continued for a while, and we finally decided on the mysterious name of ‘The Axis Cult’s That’.

Anyway, was she really planning to sell this?

More importantly, will this even sell?

Before we could go further down this line of thought—

“Now that that’s decided, let’s go! As long as we have you girls here, this product will surely fly off the shelves!”

In a good mood, Cecily picked up the crate that was filled with ‘that’.

—Well, I had a bad feeling about this.

“Boss, will we really be able to earn a large amount of money just by selling this powder? I can’t help but feel that this is too simple...”

Iris, who handed a parcel of powder to a customer, showed a doubtful expression.

I also handed a parcel of 'that' to another customer.



“Well I understand why you would think that way, since this job is straightforward and fairly relaxing. However, we are entitled to this high compensation...”

I glanced towards the person beside me.

“Come and look! This is ‘Axis Cult’s That’, handmade by the people of our cult with unspeakable methods! The method for using this is simple as well! Simply mix it with water and eat it! I personally assure you, that the drowsy and drunk feeling you get after consumption is satisfying! Now now, would you like to come try some of ‘that’, handmade by the beautiful girls here!?”

What an outstanding display.

‘Out’ in many ways that is.

Why did this person have to word it in such a way?

Next to me was Cecily, who shouted loudly on the streets, and Yunyun, whose face was flushed red in embarrassment. Despite that, she still diligently handed parcels of ‘that’ over to the customers.

The request for the salesgirls said that there would be an interview. So this was what it meant...

She planned to have pretty girls personally deliver ‘that’ to the customers.

And that was all we had to do, but...

“Uhm, this is that illegal good isn’t it?”

“You’re mistaken esteemed customer. This is an improved version that satisfies the safety standards, and isn’t ‘that’ illegal good that you’re talking about. There’s no doubt that you’ll be addicted to this immediately!”

“I’ll buy! Give me three!”

Ignoring the customer’s suspicions, the onii-sans lined up one-by-one to buy ‘that’ from us.

“Onee-san, could I ask a quick question? We’re actually selling an improved version of the Tokoroten Slime right? It’s the thing that tastes delicious when you eat it right?”

“Yep. I’m not sure if there’s anything else mixed in, but as you said, there’s no doubt that it is.”

After hearing Onee-san’s conversation with the customer, I can’t help but feel

a little uneasy. Rather, the entire thing felt a little suspicious.

“Come and look, come and see! Freshly squeezed and packed by embarrassed and beautiful girls! This is ‘that’! Right now... Hm? You over there, could you be...”

“Hm? Oh if it isn’t Cecily-san. It’s been a long time hasn’t it?”

Cecily called out to an elderly gentlemen as they passed by.

It’s seems like the two were acquaintances.

“Oho? Could this possibly be...! ‘That’!? The thing that you mix with water, and has a heavenly taste...!”

“Mhm, it’s ‘that’ you know? ‘That’! It’s something that will push human bodies to their very limits! I’ll share a little with you, since you and I have similar tastes...”

“This is really Tokoroten Slime right!? This is really just that illegal good, Tokoroten Slime right!?”

““Shhhh!””

Unable to endure this any longer, I shouted at the two. For some reason, I felt irrationally angry.

Part 5

In the end, ‘that’ – which was suspicious in a multitude of ways – sold out in the blink of an eye.

A lot of obscene and dangerous words were said in the process, but the Tokoroten slime was unexpectedly popular. Even I couldn’t hide my surprise.

As we were walking back to the church, Cecily – now in a good mood – thanked us for our work.

“Good work you three! Next is... I’ll have you dissolve ‘that’ in water, and slurp and react to it in front of the customers...”

“I’m not doing that! Hey Megumin, we’re not going to keep doing this are we!? I don’t feel good about doing this suspicious part time job...”

Yunyun’s expression made it seem like she had lost something important

today.

Anyway, we earned a lot of money in a short amount of time, so there was no reason not to continue.

“Cecily-onee-san, I had a lot of fun today! It was my first time earning money!”

“Ah! Wait Alice-san, please don’t look at me so earnestly! Otherwise I’ll feel the need to confess my sins to Aqua-sama!”

Cecily writhed in agony as she was bathed in Iris’ pure gaze.

Finally, as if running away, Cecily told everyone ‘we should all eat Tokoroten Slime together’ and ran into the kitchen...

“AH—! I’ve been had again!”

Shouted Cecily.

—We ran into the kitchen and looked for clues.

“We put the food here before we left the church didn’t we?”

“Yep, I’m sure we did, after all, this is where we put the Tokoroten Slime for safekeeping as well. I even counted the amount of food before we left.”

The crime occurred in the short hour during which we were selling the strange powder.

I don’t know how much food they stole, but it seems that the culprit had kept watch outside the church, and waited for us to leave. I didn’t think that the culprit would be so adept or dedicated.

Then, Iris suddenly shouted.

“Cecily-onee-san look at this! Look at these strange marks! It’s obvious that someone dragged something through here, but how do you suppose they stole the food?”

There was a mark that clearly indicated that something oily had been dragged across the floor recently.

Seeing that, Cecily put on a serious expression, and nodded her head.

“If I remember correctly, I was making tempura the other day, and I accidentally tipped over the pot and spilled the oil on the floor. Then I tripped over it in my heels and fell on my back.”

Is she for real? What the heck was this person doing?

Then, Yunyun, who had opened the magic-powered fridge, looked like she had discovered something.

“Cecily-san, please look at this! Inside this fridge, uhm-, there’s a piece of male underwear! He put this kind of thing in the fridge of a church where girls live! There’s no doubt the culprit is a huge pervert!”

Hearing what she said, I took a look inside the fridge. Inside it was a piece of cold underwear.

As a female as well, there was no way she could overlook this blatant sexual harassment, right?

Yunyun disgustedly grabbed the piece of underwear out of the fridge.

However, Cecily once again nodded her head with a serious expression on her face.

“Oh, those were placed inside by a male follower of the Axis cult who doesn’t have a refrigerator in his home. Apparently he refuses to wear anything but cold underwear after leaving the bath, so, everyday, after going to the public bath, he comes here to pick it up before he goes home.”

Yunyun violently threw the underwear out of her hands.

Then, Cecily raised her voice with resolve.

“That aside, we won’t make any progress if we keep doing it this way. Megumin-san, let’s go to the people who have hatred towards me and question them one-by-one! All you have to do is stand behind me with shining crimson eyes as you slap your staff against the palm of your hand. Then I’ll say to them: ‘You have something to tell me don’t you? If you don’t give it to me straight, I don’t know what the Crimson Magic clansman behind me is gonna do...’”

“I won’t help you threaten people ok!? Just talk to them normally!”

Our first suspect was the oji-san who lived the closest to the church. We

walked into his butcher shop to talk to him.

“Now then, why don’t you confess already!? A while back, when I asked for ‘Meat as soft as the cheeks of a fourteen year old girl’, you stood there with a shocked expression, since you clearly had no idea what I was talking about, right? Then, to take revenge for spreading the rumor that ‘that failure of a butcher shop doesn’t even know the difference between good and bad meat’, you committed a crime...”

“Oi wait a second, after making such a sick-minded order at my store, you went on to spread that kind of rumor!? Come with me to the police station, I’m gonna report you for obstruction of business!”

“Ah-, Pl-, Please hold up a moment, don’t go to the police, I beg you! When I went there recently, I had a good vibe with a young onii-san, but he ended up looking at me with a contemptuous gaze while saying ‘you again?’ At the very least, I want to check if that onii-san has a lover or not...!”

...Should we just leave this case alone and go home?

I turned towards Yunyun, and on this rare occasion, we nodded to each other in understanding and agreement.

Alright, let’s go home.

“...Uhm, oji-sama, could you please wait? I will apologize with her, so could you please forgive Cecily-onee-san?”

From the audience that decided to not interfere, came the voice of a pure and innocent girl.

“E-Erm... Well, ah, I uhm, well, I guess going to the police would be too extreme... A-Alright, in light of this ojou-chan’s words, I’ll forgive you this time. Just don’t do this ever again.”

Bathed in the gaze of the implorable Iris, the oji-san abruptly turned his face away.

Cecily – who we were about to send off – clung to Iris with tears in her eyes.

“Ahhhhh Alice-san thank you very muuuuchhhh! As thanks I’ll let you be onee-chan’s little sister!”

“U-Uhm, about that... I recently got a new onii-chan, so...”

Looking at Iris’ bewildered reaction, I thought that this turn of events was rather regretful. After all, this was a good chance to leave Cecily behind for good.

“That was dangerous~. I got done in by that oji-san’s loaded questions.”

“Onee-san, didn’t he just take the opportunity to arrest you once you let your crimes slip?”

Ignoring my straight-man act, Cecily said:

“We’ll go there next! It was a mistake to go to all the places nearby with a brute force method! We should question the places with the highest probability first!”

Without waiting for our reply, Cecily took off.

“She sure is energetic...”

Iris harbored such thoughts towards the situation. As for me, well, rather than ‘energetic’, I would call that ‘mindless’.

“...Hey Megumin, wouldn’t it have been better for us to go home after eating lunch?”

I couldn’t find the words to refute.

Part 6

Sure enough, the people Cecily went after were the ‘fated enemies’ of the Axis cult.

“Come on out you Eris cultists! Give my important Pucchin Pudding back to me!”

Cecily vigorously kicked on the door of the Eris cult’s church.

“Don’t look Alice-chan! Remember to look away from things like that, and grow up to be a fine person ok?”

Seeing the way Cecily was acting, Yunyun covered Iris’ eyes from behind with her hands.



“Onee-san, what are you trying to do all of a sudden. Even if the Eris cultists did something wrong, this is still too much.”

No matter how much I asked her to go back, she won't separate herself from

the church's door.

That was when—

“So you came again didn't you!? How many times have I told you to ‘please don't come here again’!?”

The church's door opened, and the priest of the Eris cult showed herself.

—After we explained the situation, the Eris cult's priest released a deep sigh.

“Uhm, we're always busy trying to heal the wounds of the adventurers, so we don't have the free time to go to your church and do such a thing. We don't have a shortage of food either. Why would we, who serve Eris-sama, do something like theft?”

“You filthy liar! If you didn't have a shortage of food, then you wouldn't have looked at me like that back when I was ate a skewer in front of your face!”

“Did you do such a thing?”

Muttered the Eris priest. For some reason, she seem to flinch for a brief moment.

“The Eris cult believes in the humbleness of poverty. If it's only just eating a skewer in front of us—”

“Ah, you're lying again! Because you Eris cultists don't get enough protein, your chest doesn't grow! And I know that you people are always troubled by that!”

“D-Damn you, how dare you say such a thing you disbeliever!”

Trying to break up the fight, I put myself between them and wryly said:

“I understand that two cults have a bad relationship with each other, but is it appropriate for religious representatives to fight in such a manner?”

The Eris cultist – who realized that she had dropped to the level of Cecily – blushed in embarrassment.

“Erm... T-That would be truly shameful...”

“Bleh, you're the one who got angry!”

“Onee-san, I’m talking to you as well!”

Cecily, who continued to jeer at the Eris priest from behind me, seemed rather shocked.

“But if this breast-pad priest doesn’t know anything about it, then who would... and If we don’t find any clues here then there’s no way we can find the culprit...”

“You, I won’t hold back anymore! I’ll bring my mace and raid your paltry church if I have to!”

After that, I forced Cecily to apologize to the Eris cultist priest, who seemed to be covering her chest. Before Cecily could cause any more trouble, we decided to leave.

How should I say this? Could this really be called a grudge?

Take that Eris priest for example; No matter how pissed one got, no one really wanted to be involved with the Axis cult.

But perhaps this was something like ‘an eye for an eye’ for all the trouble the Axis cult caused?

“Onee-san, why don’t we return to the church?”

I suggested that to Cecily, whom Yunyun and Iris were trying their best to stop from scribbling on the Eris cult’s signboard.

“—We’ve been had again.”

Murmured Cecily.

“How much did we lose? It doesn’t seem any worse than what happened earlier today...”

Cecily, who sat in front of the refrigerator didn’t seem to have any particular reaction.

“The Tokoroten Slime that I put in the innermost area is lost... How many times has this been... Whoever the culprit is, they keep taking my favorite things with pinpoint precision! Is this the doing of the demon king army?”

“The demon king army won’t just steal from the refrigerator of a single

church. Anyway, I have something I'm curious about."

The trace of 'something being dragged' that Iris found earlier seemed to have extended from the kitchen to the back door of the church.

And if I remember correctly, the damage was limited to the garden and the fridge.

I slammed open the back door of the church and—!

"...Uhm, onee-san. Do Tokoroten Slimes eat vegetables?"

"Ah, what do you mean by that!? It's true that the captured slimes will sometimes become energetic and swell...! Oh, could that have been a miracle brought upon by Aqua-sama!?"

"Cecily-san, no matter how I look at this, the culprit is the slime! Go and apologize to the people you accused!"

"—Don't wanna... It's a lot of trouble..."

The culprit was the Cecily's magically modified slime, whose life force had increased as a result of the modifications.

Yunyun and I continued to lecture Cecily, but she didn't seem to reflect on her actions whatsoever. At this point, Iris had already stopped lecturing her.

"Geez, Alice, you should at least know about the Axis cult. No matter how little you know about the world, there should be a limit."

"Even if you say that, I didn't think that Cecily-onee-san was a bad person... I have faith in my ability to judge people."

But those were the same eyes that graded Aqua as ordinary...

Then, Cecily – who had been scolded by us – showed a strange face.

Kneeling on the bed, she began to tremble...

"Alice-san, you must join the Axis cult! Yes, you must!"

"Alice, let's go home. It was a mistake to bring you here. We won't ever come here again, so just forget about what happened today ok?"

Taking Iris out of the royal castle was already a crime, so making her an Axis

cultist would surely result in the death penalty.

“Cecily-onee-san, I don’t know very much about the Axis cult, so could I ask what they usually do?”

“Well asked! Well aren’t you impatient Alice-san? But that’s good, cause here at the Axis cult, we believe that self-control is poisonous to the body! We believe that we must live life the way we desire! Do what you please. Do it even if it’s selfish. If there’s someone you like, regardless of the difference in status between you and your companion, even if there’s an imbalance of identities, you can pursue them as you please.”

“Alice-chan, don’t listen to what she’s saying! Here, I’ll block your ears!”

As Cecily continued to happily preach, Yunyun plugged Iris’ ears with her hands.

—It was then.

As door of the church were flung open, a familiar voice resounded through the church.

“I heard that a blond-haired blue-eyed lovable young girl is here! Do not try to resist, and like real adults, we... Ah-, Alice-sama, I finally found you!”

Part 7

Standing there was the white-suit wearing bodyguard, Claire.

Seeing her, Iris seemed to shrink in despondence.

“Is it already time to go home...?”

“Alice-sama, this is not a matter of ‘time to go home’! In the first place, you were not given permission to go outside!”

Though Iris’ behavior was as it usually was in this situation, Claire was unexpectedly playing the straight-man role. Cecily inched towards Claire and said:

“Erm, and who might you be? Nice to meet you, I am the priest in charge of this church and the leader of the Axis cult’s Axel branch, Cecily. Alice-san has been under the protection of this church, so there is no need for you to worry.

Please do rest assured.”

Rather, we were the ones protecting Cecily. Though, unlike what would be expected from Axis cultists, she returned a sincere reply.

“Eh? A-, Ah... Nice to meet you as well.”

Claire showed a moment’s hesitation before replying.

“I am Alice’s guardian, Claire. Thank you for protecting Alice-sama during this time. It would appear that the Axis cult has esteemed people like you as well.”

Saying that, she lowered her head towards Cecily.

This short-tempered onee-san had attacked Kazuma last time, but it seems like she was putting up this front for Alice’s sake.

Just as I began to feel moved by her actions—

“I see, so you are Alice-san’s guardian... Well, I was teaching Alice-san about the doctrine of the Axis cult a moment ago. Would you, as her guardian, like to join the Axis cult as well?”

“Join the Axis cult!? N-No, that would be a great problem... Rather, Alice-sama is not a full-fledged adult yet, so it would be troublesome for her to do such a thing... Furthermore, since Alice-sama must maintain an equal perspective on all things, it would be inappropriate for her to join a specific denomination...”

It would seem that Claire, realizing that her opponent was a skilled female with a holy affiliation, had decided not to use force. Instead, she tried to break the flow of the conversation, however—

“I understand that you are opposed to the Axis cult. However, I can sense the scent of a fellow comrade on you.”

“T-The scent of a fellow comrade...”

Though Claire seemed slightly disturbed, she still raised her arm to smell the sleeves of her suit.

“Are you not suffering from your unrequited love? Are you not carrying some unforgivable thoughts? In the Axis cult, it doesn’t matter if your companion is an undead or a devil, nor does it matter if they are of the same gender or of

different statuses, we shall allow it regardless.”

“Same gender or different statuses!? TT-That is... No, but—”

Claire seemed to be intensely moved. Perhaps some teaching of the Axis cult pulled at her very heartstrings.

“Now, self-control is poisonous you know? Self-control is a violation of the Axis cult’s doctrine. Your dear wishes, your dear thoughts-...!”

“Ahhhhh! P-, Perhaps we can continue this another day! Alice-sama, please say your farewells!”

It appeared that Claire thought that it would be a bad idea to stay any longer. She quickly grabbed Alice’s hand and hurriedly left the church.

“...Well then, boss, Yunyun-san, Cecily-onee-san, see you tomorrow!”

“It’s not ‘see you tomorrow’! I’ll keep an eye on you the entire day tomorrow, so you won’t be allowed to come here!”

Iris, who had been feeling despondent about going home a moment ago, suddenly become clear and energetic. She waved to us as she left.

“—Even though I got that kind of response, she still got away...”

Cecily murmured to herself in regret.

By response, did she mean Iris or Claire?

Though, knowing that both would join the Axis cult if given a little push, I felt a little scared.

“Hey Megumin, that person named Claire said that ‘Alice-sama must maintain an equal perspective’ right? So Alice-chan...”

Without saying anymore, Yunyun vigorously shook her head.

She seemed to think that it was impossible.

Leaving her be, I turned towards Cecily.

“Onee-san”

“Could you go back to calling me ‘Cecily-onee-chan’ please?”

As usual, she did and acted as she pleased.

“Actually, we want our part-time job to continue after this, so we can keep earning money.”

“Well I’m grateful that you want to. Other than ‘Axis cult’s that’ I still have a lot of good money making ideas you know? For example, ‘Rice balls made by Beautiful Girls’, ‘Balloons Blown by Beautiful Girls’, ‘Beautiful Girl’s...’”

“Aren’t these all just things that are made by beautiful girls!? It would be better to think of slightly more proper ideas...”

Hearing what I had to say, Cecily began to happily laugh.

“Since you want to make money so badly, could this be related to Alice-san?”

Of all times, she decided that now would be the moment to see through my thoughts. Even though she usually acted so dumb...

“Well, it’s kind of related to that girl. What we want to do is secure a source of income, and expand our ground. It’s not just a dream; I strongly believe that we will one day help that person defeat the demon king...”

“To say that defeating the demon king is not just a dream, you ambitions have grown bigger again!”

Yes, I’m sure that it’s not a dream.

I felt that that distant masked thief would be the one to defeat the demon king.

And then, if he defeats the demon king...

“In a peaceful world without the demon king, I’m sure that that girl would be able to step out into the world with far more freedom.”

Then I will invite him to a picnic like the one we had today.

I’m sure that girl would be happy as well.

“I’m not very skillful with money, so could I ask for onee-san’s cooperation? I mean, onee-san, you already look like you have a lot of good ideas.”

Originally, I thought that it would be better to leave it to that man.

But well, if the organization becomes bigger, I can boast to him about it.

Yunyun didn't seem to be against leaving the task to this troublesome onee-san either. Rather, she seemed to be a bit happy.

However...

"I'm not going to join you that easily"

Cecily firmly shook her head as she mercilessly said those words.

"First and foremost, I am an Axis cultist that loves lolis. So if Alice-san, Megumin-san and Yunyun-san are going to do something so interesting..."

Her eyes seemed to sparkle as she continue to run her good-for-nothing mouth.

"Then this onee-san won't mind mixing in with this strange organization!"

Part 8

"——I'm home——"

"Ah, welcome back Megumin. With my skills, I've made a brilliant feast for tonight! Look forward to it!"

Returning to the mansion like I usually would, I was proudly greeted by Darkness.

Then, Kazuma, who laid down on the couch in the living room, said:

"Hey Megumin, can you try to stop this person over here? She keeps complaining about what I cooked yesterday, and she even told me that 'Today, I shall triumph over you!'. To be honest, it's kinda getting annoying."

"You just said its annoying didn't you! How dare you mock me you imbecile! Everyone, witness me! Today, as a humble lady, I shall defeat this NEET's cooking!"

In reply to Darkness, who shouted angrily from the kitchen, he said:

"Yo Darkness, yesterday's Shabu Shabu didn't really suit my taste alright!? I mean, it might be what you call 'high-class cuisine', but I prefer things like junk food over that. If you could, I want to eat something greasy today."

<TL Note: Shabu Shabu is a Japanese-style hot pot, primarily consisting of thinly sliced meat and vegetables.>

“Something greasy... I’ve already prepared the food, but I guess it can’t be helped. I’ll make something right now. Geez, if you have selfish request like that, tell me earlier...”

Then, Aqua barged her way into the conversation.

“But I want something simple and light. Ah, I think something I can slurp would be great!”

“Something you can slurp... Uhm, you mean something like noodles? Ugh, well it can’t be helped, I’ll make that as well... M-, Megumin, what about you?”

After getting Aqua’s order, Darkness – making an valid assumption – turned to me for my request.

“You’ve made enough already haven’t you? I’m fine with anything. You’re cooking is pretty plain, so there’s really nothing to complain about.”

“Megumin, please don’t call my cooking ‘plain’! Anyway, thanks for not ordering something out of the blue. I’ll make the extras now, so please wait a bit.

Saying that, Darkness returned to the kitchen. Meanwhile, Aqua retrieved a board game from the shelf, and brought it to Kazuma, who was sleeping on the sofa.

“Kazuma-san Kazuma-san, let’s play until dinner is ready ok? Today’s me will be different from the usual me, after all, I have a great secret strategy to use today!.”

Aqua mindlessly raised a ‘loss flag’ and lined up the pieces.

“What do you mean be ‘great secret strategy’? Last time we played, you said that: ‘Since there’s no time limit, I can use a stalling strategy! I might not be able to beat my opponents in a match of intelligence, but I absolutely won’t lose in a match of endurance! I can stall until morning, so try your best ok!?’ and other meaningless things, but after we started you fell asleep in 10 minutes you know?”

“Shut up Kazuma. That was that, this is this. Heh, the strategy this time is really amazing you know? Well then, Kazuma, you can go first. Don’t hold back

ok?”

Sitting across from Aqua, who was brimming with confidence, Kazuma made the first move.

“You fell for it Kazuma! I have used my wisdom to figure out this brilliant strategy; I will make the second move, and play the exact same move as my opponent! Basically, I will use the same force as my opponent in order to defeat them! Ah well done me! Yes, if I can make this an evenly matched game, then it’s a net plus for me!”

Whilst boasting, Aqua played the same move as Kazuma.

“Yes, this is a revolutionary strategy that will instill fear into my opponent! All I need to do is make the same move as my opponent. And if I don’t need to think, that means my opponent will be tired out first! Finally, at the instant they make a mistake, I bring out my full...!”

Aqua stopped right there.

It seems that she had somehow fallen into a pinch already.

If one were to play the same move as their opponent, then the one with the first move would have the advantage.

As I looked down at Aqua, who grunted in distress, I picked up Chomusuke who was cuddling near my feet, and gave today’s activity report.

“Kazuma, the spoils of battle today were quite splendid. First, my army has successfully secured a source of income for the sake of our future activities. I suppose it is a great leap towards achieving our goals.”

Without removing his gaze from the board:

“Well that’s great. Also, by ‘a source of income’, you mean you did something like a part time job?”

“Yea I guess. We accepted a request from the guild, and defeated some slimes.”

Knocking a piece over:

“Slime extermination huh. Well if it’s like that then it shouldn’t be too

dangerous. If the other children get into a pinch, remember to help them out ok? Oho, a quick check.”

“Hey, isn’t this a bit weird? If we’re playing the same moves, why am I at a disadvantage?”

It seems that he still thought that I was playing around.

Well, I guess its fine as it is now.

Someday, when our group becomes big enough to make him fall on his butt, I will tell him all about it.

That wouldn’t be too bad.

“Everyone, dinner is ready! You’re not allowed to complain alright? Well then, get seated!”

I guess I should go help Darkness arrange the table.

“Now that I think about it, there’s one more thing—”

I said to Kazuma, who counterattacked Aqua’s move without hesitation:

“My group has gained another member.”

Chapter 3: The Wandering Thieving Group

Part 1

—Everything was going smoothly.

First, the thieving group obtained a secret base on the first day... No, I mean, a base of operations hideout was established, and I gained a powerful fighter as an underling.

Then, recently, I got a regular allowance... No, I mean, I managed to secure funding for the thieving group, and got a healing magic user to join our ranks.

To be honest, I never thought that it would go so well.

Rather, I feel that the thieving group might reach a scale that was greater than I had initially projected.

That was because...

“—Megumin-san, listen listen! If onee-san sends a letter to the Axis cult headquarters regarding the thieving group, I’m sure that people who want to join the group will come rushing in. Isn’t this a good chance to expand our forces in one fell swoop?”

Cecily shrewdly moved her luggage into the largest mansion in Axel that was our base of operations. The expression on her face made it seem as though she was the owner of this mansion, but I knew otherwise.

“...Axis cultists? Uhm, could you please put a little bit of thought into it?”

Cecily, who idled on the expensive looking sofa that taken for herself, was the splitting image of Aqua.

If all the Axis cultists were like this, then I feel that I should hold back a little.

“If I write that, ‘besides me, the thieving group is composed of lolis’, I’m confident that Zesta-sama will resign from his position as the head priest, and come here immediately, but that would be really troublesome wouldn’t it? Well, if you’re troubled by something, feel free to borrow the power of the Axis cult anytime you like ok?”

“T-, Thank you very much, when the time comes, I will be in your care.”

The only time I’ll be exhausted to that extent is after my magic power is drained from using explosion magic.

Towards Cecily and I, who both sunk into sofa in the same manner, Yunyun, who was reading some letter, restlessly said:

“U-, Uhm, Megumin? This is about the letter I recently sent to my dad but... he wrote back that ‘because of how cool and fun it sounds, it seems that there are a lot of people who want to become involved in this’...”

“.....Nope, all the Crimson Magic clansmen have the important job of monitoring the demon king’s castle. Furthermore, they’re an important emergency force for the capital in case anything goes wrong. It wouldn’t be right for them to come for something like this right?”

There aren’t any problems when it comes to the fighting power of the people of the village.

And there wouldn’t be any problems if our goal was to raid the demon king’s castle, but our opponents were corrupt nobles.

Furthermore, we weren’t burglars, but chivalrous thieves.

“Well, I guess it would be more festive around here if we gained more companions. Then just send a reply that says ‘Please assist us when some great problem occurs’ ok?”

“I-, I guess you’re right, when it comes to that, we’ll surely...”

Hearing my ambiguous words, the master loner smiled at the thought of more companions.

I can’t help but get the feeling that the scale of our operations will be bigger than I thought.

Yes, that was because—

“Yesterday I was boasting to my father about how I was making an organization for the sake of justice with my friends, and he told me that I could borrow as many of the best knights as I wanted. Also, he said that I could take as many much money as needed! Big boss, if you’re troubled by anything, feel

free to tell me about it ok?”

...Yep, everything was really going smoothly.

But how should I say this... I feel that the scale of the organization is already beyond what I had envisioned.

Part 2

Anyway—

“You three gave me a list of names of people who want to join the organization, but I haven’t really scanned through all of them. More importantly, from a numbers perspective, there are a lot of knights and mercenaries who aren’t skilled enough for this. My goal is to find people who would follow their own way regardless of whether or not they become wanted criminals. To find people who would join our thieving group to help others from the shadows. No matter how much I think about it, these aren’t people who are suited for this.”

After a short rest, and recovering enough magic power to move, I scanned through the stack of paper the three of them handed to me.

Listed were Axis cultists, Crimson Magic clansmen, and famous knights and powerful adventurers from the capital.

Our goal was to be a small group of elites, just like those people.

Now that my plan has come into motion, there shouldn’t be any earth shattering developments that would make this come to a halt.

After earnest explaining this to them, Yunyun broke into a grin.

“...Oi, if you have something to say, let’s hear it.”

“There’s nothing really—? I was just thinking that Megumin, as usual, is weak towards sudden developments al—right?”

The loner, who acted as though she had seen through me, stood poised for an attack. Then, Iris restlessly said.

“Big boss, I understand what you’re thinking, but why don’t we recruit a few people? Whilst I can serve as the vanguard for two magicians and a priest with

my ability to use a sword and magic, I would like there to be at least one more front-line class in our party.”

“We’re not going to hunt monsters, so there’s no need to worry about our party balance alright? In the first place, our combat power is already overkill if we’re planning to attack a noble’s mansion.”

We had two archwizards of the Crimson Magic clansman, and a balance-breaker princess who inherited the hero’s blood.

Though I’m not really sure how to describe the last person, her help was appreciated as she would be the healer in the chance that something went wrong.

Despite what I said, Iris showed a troubled expression.

“Uhm, are we not going to go on adventures occasionally? Also, I would like some kouhai group members as well. To be an underling forever is a bit...”

“...About adventures, well, since this loner over here is looking at me with sparkly eyes of anticipation, I’ll consider it. Also, you want to have more recruits for such a baseless reason? There’s no choice, I’ll promote you to my left-hand man, so please be patient. By the way, Yunyun is my right-hand man, so overall you are number-three in this organization.””

Even though I called them my left and right hand, it’s not like I gave them a salary or an allowance, so they were merely superficial terms.

Also, between the four of us, ‘number three’ didn’t really mean anything, yet Iris seemed to be innocently happy.

Despite how strong she was, she was still a child.

Unexpectedly, this girl might be just as simple as Yunyun.

“What about onee-san!? Hey Megumin, why does onee-san get nothing!? Onee-san wants to brag to other people as well, so please give me a title!”

The problem was this adult who seemed more childish than Iris.

Cecily gripped my shoulders and shook me back and forth.

“Onee-san is the leader of the Axel branch of the Axis cult right? So don’t you

already have a great title to brag about?”

“That’s not it! Even I want a title like right hand or left hand or lover or husband or wife! I want a title that would bring our relationship closer!”

“There were some weird terms mixed in there! ...Then I think it would be fine to put you as my consultant, since priests are supposed to listen to confessions anyway. If there’s anything I’m troubled with, I will consult with you, onee-san...Consult...”

Consult with this person...?

“Why did you suddenly stop Megumin-san? If you have anything you’re troubled with, feel free to consult with onee-san anytime! In particular, my specialty is consulting with love troubles! Come on, since you’re going through puberty right now, isn’t this perfect?”

The selfish adult Cecily, suddenly mentioned something that made me lose made me feel agitated.

How should I say this? This person was occasionally sharp-minded.

Without showing my agitation, I said—

“What are you saying onee-san, I am someone who pursues the ultimate path of explosions. I don’t have to free time for any rambling love affairs.”

“That’s right Cecily-san. If Megumin is ever legible for a girls’ talk, the first thing I’ll do is suspect whether she had been impersonated by a doppelganger.”

Iris watched the conversation unfold in a restless manner, whilst Yunyun, who I’ve known the longest amongst the people present, looked me with a condescending gaze, as she budged into the conversation and said unnecessary things.

...In any case, this girl would occasionally act absentmindedly.

“Mhm. Onee-san has observed that, recently, Megumin-san has a lot of openings in her behavior, and that she’s gotten ... Also, there are times where she will show a maiden-like expression.”

Although I looked down on Axis cultists in general, perhaps this onee-san might be more than just a simple deviant.

“Precisely speaking, you perceive onee-san as something like a lover don’t you, Megumin-san!? Well, I guess that’s puberty for you, so I guess it can’t be helped right? Onee-san is ready ok!? Anyway, how does this sound? Megumin-san will be the husband for four days in a week, and I’ll be the husband for the other three. I think that Megumin-san is manlier than I am in many ways.”

It seems that my worries were for naught.

On the other hand, Iris, who seemed to be interested in what Yunyun meant by ‘girls’ talk’ seemed to be ready to ask a bold question. Well, I can’t allow myself to be questioned any further.

“That’s enough, let’s return to our topic for today! ...We have obtained a hideout and a base of operations. Our next task is to gather proficient talent. As of now, we’re still lacking a variety of elements for a proper operational structure, so I would like to gather some decent people.”

“Please wait, you said that we’re lacking a variety of elements right? But I guess that I do agree that we need to gather some decent people first. Uhm, for example, people who can go with me to eat meals outside of times where we’re gathered like this, or really kind people...”

“Big boss, vanguards! Let’s go find vanguard adventurers for the sake of going on adventures!”

“According to onee-san’s information, there are four young rich men in this town. I’d rather it not be a high-class blond-haired handsome guy, but if they can give me a life of comfort, then I guess I’ll have to compromise.

Regardless of who it was, why did none of them have any sort of unity?

Now, I can’t help but think that Kazuma, who usually leads our group, is doing something amazing.

“No, we’re going to look people with the ‘thief’ job, who are suitable for our goals. We aren’t here to gather friends or gather adventurers or gather prospective fiancés. As of now, our group is still very far from a real thieving group.”

“Onee-san has always been called a thief for nabbing the provisions of the Eris cultists. Aren’t I suitable material for a thieving group?”

“Do you want to change your job from priest to thief? If you want to, I can go with you to the adventurers’ guild to get a class change you know?”

It was then—

“About the ‘high-class blond-haired handsome guy’ you were talking about, does everyone know? In truth, a former noble from a neighboring nation came to this town to be an adventurer.”

For some reason, Iris’ eyes shone as he said that.

From a broad perspective, nobles were people who were born with high latent talent.

While they were not as thorough as royalty like Iris, they tended to send their daughters to become the mistress of heroes. In such a manner, they earnest took their bloodline.

“A former noble? I don’t understand why they fell from their position, but they probably have a lot of hidden assets. Onee-san is interested.”

Rather than the person’s abilities, Cecily showed interest in the other details regarding the person, and her eyes began to shine, but—

“This is quite a famous topic of discussion amongst royalty and nobles in various countries. A young boy from a lower-ranked noble family managed to obtain the super-rare job of ‘Dragon Knight’, not to mention, he was also the youngest person in history to obtain it. The young boy showed his talent as a dragon knight, and he was unrivaled in the kingdom with the spear. Furthermore, he was loved by dragons from the moment of his birth. With his seriousness, honesty, and ability to persevere, he was revered as a role-model for any knight. As should be expected however, he came to yearn for a young girl...”

The young boy was tasked with the role as a bodyguard for the princess of the nation.

He, who yearned for her more than any other, realized that his fleeting love for the princess of his age was unreasonable.

As should be expected of a member of royalty, the princess already had a

fiancé. Knowing well of the differences in their status, the young boy passed these bittersweet days without telling her of what he thought.

However, by chance, the young boy came to know what the princess thought...

“—After that, the boy, despite knowing of the great consequences, rode off with the princess on the back of a dragon. No matter how hard the nation mobilized their forces to search, not a single trace of them was found. However, after a week, the boy and the princess returned to the royal castle. The young boy was subjected to punishment, his qualifications as a dragon knight were taken away, and his household disbanded.”

For some reason, Iris seemed to be overcome with emotion as she continued to tell the story. The rest of us, who were intently listening, deeply exhaled.

“Basically, he became a good-for-nothing that kidnapped the princess and sacrificed his path to becoming an elite, right? Kidnapping a princess is the job of an evil magician or the demon king, and to be honest, I think that stealing away someone’s work is something that should never be done.”

“Y-, You’re mistaken! Despite the differences in status between the boy and the princess that would not allow this love to be realized, their feelings still managed to align with one another! It is a wonderful story! Beyond what I’ve already told you, apparently, the princess had wished to ride on the back of a dragon. Then, riding behind the boy, the princess had surely said something like this: ‘It would be great if we could stay together like this, and go somewhere faraway...’ -!”

“KYA-! What is this, this is amazing! B-, Basically, this person had threw aside his fame as the hero of the nation, and his path towards becoming an elite, all for the sake of fulfilling the princess’ small wish...!?”

For some odd reason, Yunyun grew excited as she listened to Iris’ delusional story.

“Yes, that’s exactly right! Willing to accept any punishment as a result of his actions, he fulfilled this unforgiveable dream! This is the true form of the selfish delusions and rumors amongst the ladies of nobility and royalty! How is it? Isn’t a cool development like this something that you long for? Isn’t a tragic love like

this truly bitter and heartrending...-!?”

Though, she just said that ‘this is the true form of the selfish delusions and rumors’.

“Alice-chan, are you saying that this person was chased out of his country, and came to this town to be an adventurer!? Let’s recruit him! I will definitely make this person my comrade!”

Albeit in a selfish manner, the two of them were fired up. I guess it does sound a bit cool.

If it were true that is.

Regarding the star-crossed lovers portion of the story, perhaps Iris, who was too a princess, held some affection towards it.

As for Yunyun, who didn’t have a single friend or companion, she was probably moved by the very existence of someone who would go to that extent for someone else.

“By the way, I wonder what happened during that one-week period where they were on the run? Did some life-changing experience happen during that time? A-, And how far did they go...!”

“What are you imagining Alice-chan? That...! T-, That is...-!”

The two flushed faced people began to make a Kya~ Kya~ ruckus.

...Well, it seems like the two of them were thoroughly imagining a situation that girls in puberty would imagine.

“Geez, stop being noisy and let’s go find this person. I have the experience of being in the same bath and sleeping in the same bed with Kazuma. As for our relationship, I suppose that we’ll probably go all the way to the end like this. I’m sure that that person is older than us, so I think that it should be a given that he crossed that line.”

“Wait a second Megumin, I think I just heard you say something very important!”

“ !”

The two of them who had been immersed in a heated discussion, immediately sprung from their seat on the sofa.

“What do you mean by very important? Wouldn’t it be strange instead for someone of my age to have no experience whatsoever? Rather, since we live under the same roof, shouldn’t this kind of development be a given? Well then, let’s go catch that so-called virtuoso. You should all learn from onee-san, and act a bit calmer...”

Nothing more needed to be said to the two who placed their hands over their mouths in inconcealable surprise.

“Hey Megumin, Cecily-san is asleep...”

“...Since it’ll be a pain to wake her up, let’s just leave her like this.”

I feel like I understand how Kazuma, who takes care of Aqua all the time, feels now.

Part 3

Walking through the back alleyways of the town of Axel, we headed towards the adventurer’s guild.

The reason we didn’t use the main streets was because a certain person had probably come to this in search of Iris.

While we can stop her from being brought back eventually, it would be for the best if we didn’t do anything to stand out.

“Well then, how are we going to search for this former Dragon Knight that was also an elite amongst nobles?”

Wanting to dispel the lifeless atmosphere that was unique to the back alleyways, I asked Iris.

“That’s right... That person probably has the golden hair that is inherited by nobility. Also, since he had become the youngest dragon knight, he should be fairly strong, and should stand out a lot in this town. Finally, if we’re looking for distinctive traits, then we should look for someone who is proficient with the spear.”

I haven’t really seen many blonde-haired males in this town.

The one's I've seen are probably related to nobility anyway.

And I'm don't really have any recollection of any blonde-haired male adventurers either...

"M-, More importantly boss! A little earlier, about what you said about taking a bath with onii-sama, and sleeping in the same bed as onii-sama..."

Iris, who had been brooding over what I said since she learned of it, timidly asked me.

"It's exactly as I said. Well, in any case, this isn't anything strange for a healthy adolescent guy and girl living under the same roof."

""!!"

I turned a sidelong glance towards the two, who were speechless, and – allowing a victorious smile to surface – I continued.

"To add onto that, recently I've made a promise with Kazuma to go to his room to play, and I probably seem like a simple and easy girl. Well, about that, I'm purposely delaying the promise as what you might call an adult tactic..."

In the face of my tale, the two of them showed expression of fearful awe.

"I-, In any case, you're actually just getting cold feet aren't you Megumin? Like you're afraid that some trouble will happen when you get the chance... In the first place, it's not like you can prove any of what you said. If something like that really happened, then it's probably after some very shocking things happened, and you used the chance to do some desperate things... At least that's how I see it."

"Shut up, what can a loner that hasn't even held a boy's hand understand?"

""!?"

Yunyun looked at me with teary eyes for a brief moment, and took out the memo that recorded the history of duels between my mature self and her. She promptly added a star that represented victory onto it.

Then, despite her grumbly demeanor, Yunyun pretended to be calm as she mumble to herself.

“At any rate, a blonde-haired person in this town, who is proficient with the spear... Furthermore, he’s probably a person with proper manners and a gentleman who is both serious and compassionate... Uhm... S-, Surely, he is also a tall and cool person as well... Or at least, it would be great if it was true...”

“Your own wishes were mixed in at some point you know? Well, a lot of the nobles are good-looking as well, and I’m sure there’s some of them who are serious if we talk to them. I’m fairly sure that we’ll be able meet them...”

Well, if they had those distinctive traits, then surely, we’ll find him pretty soon—

“I’ve never heard of an adventurer that has all those traits.”

Just as I was having these carefree thoughts—

Arriving at the adventurer’s guild, we hurriedly asked the receptionist onee-san, but...

“Is there anyone who’s close to that description? There aren’t a lot of spear-using adventurers to begin with, and in this town, there’s a particularly large amount of problem children amongst the adventurers. I’m sure that a serious and compassionate person like that would stand out.”

“But it’s not like Megumin-san is part of the adventurer party that stands out the most or anything, right? Well, to be specific, I can think of people who matches one or two terms of your description, but I have no impression of anyone who matches all of them...”

Hearing what the troubled onee-san said, we glanced at each other.

“... Well, then could you introduce us to those who match a few of the conditions I mentioned?”

Like this—

In order to find the dragon knight who had been driven out of the neighboring country, we followed the guidance of the receptionist onee-san to find the people in question—

“—I can’t remember doing anything shameful in my lifetime, and I’m confident that I have lived a true and honest life. I was quite skilled, and in the

past, my name was fairly well known, but... What do you need from a retired, veteran old man like myself?"

The first person we were introduced to was an oji-san

"Erm, we wanted to hear oji-san's heroic tales. Come on, Alice, Yunyun, it's your turn. Alice, don't you like to hear about people's adventures because you look up to adventurers? And Yunyun is fine with any conversation. Aren't you happy to be able to talk to people?"

"Oji-san, please feel free to tell us about your adventures when you were young!"

"Eh-!? It's true that I'm happy to be able to talk to anyone, but in the first place, doesn't the age of the person in question not match up at all?"

Leaving the serious-looking oji-san alone for the time being, I decided to press onward.

"—It's true that I think that I'm fairly accomplished and skilled, but I've haven't even held a spear in my hand before. Oh, but if you're talking about the other 'spear', I hold it in my hands every night. You get it? GAHAHAHAHA!"

The next person we were introduced to was an adventurer who threw the worst kind of lowlife joke at us the moment we met. I promptly buried my fist in his face.

"—It's true that the spear is my forte, and amongst the people I compete with, all of them know my name... Even then, this is quite rare, to think that there would be girls who would be interested in the sport of spear tossing.

We were even introduced to people who weren't adventurers.

Then—

"Oh? What's this, aren't you the explosion girl? What do you want with me? I'm not gonna talk about money alright? After all, there aren't any places that would lend me any more money, and I don't have any money left for booze or food either. Actually, if I ever get my hands on a fortune, I'll pay you back several times over, so let me borrow some ok?"

The last person we were introduced to was a blonde-haired delinquent called

Dust.

Despite not having any money, Dust wasted his afternoon away sitting at the corner of the adventurer's guild, without so much as any intention to do any job. The onee-san who introduced me to this thing seemed to quickly retreated away.

"Sorry, but this thing is definitely not what we're looking for. What we're looking for is a young blonde handsome and strong man. Furthermore, he is someone who is accomplished, honest, and has the capacity to persevere. Most importantly, he is a gentleman that uses a spear. Other than the color of its hair, this thing doesn't match for anything else right? Not to mention the shade of blonde seemed to be faded as well."

"If there was really a wonderful person like that, then I would actually like you to introduce him to me, but... Well, in any case, there aren't any more adventurers who align with the distinctive traits that you provided. To begin with, Lalatina-san, and Dust-san are the only two adventurers in this town who have blonde hair... Well, uhm, I suppose that he is quite skilled only when it comes to drinking, and he does accomplish something..."

"The only thing that he accomplishes is spreading a bad name about us! I saw you telling the new adventurers to not go close to that thing you know!?"

It's was a truly terrible thing for people to end up like this thing, but this in particular gave off the feeling of a complete and utter mistake of a person.

"What the heck! Ain't I your friend Yunyun! Give me some booze ok!"

"Rather than friends, we're just mere acquaintances ok!? The people around us are giving us contemptful gazes, so please stop already!"

At some point during the time I was talking to the receptionist lady, the thing had grabbed Yunyun.

I gave a hand signal towards Iris, who was still listening to the oji-san's adventuring stories.

"Alice, listen closely. That thing is the only blonde-haired male adventurer in this town."

“We were just getting to the good part where the oji-san’s spear broke, and he awakened the power in his bare hands to strike the one-hit bear... but that aside, if that person is the only one with blonde hair, then why don’t we first inquire about him?”

Iris, who returned to the group, suggested that we first investigate.

“No. If I had to choose a single person that says the most useless things, ‘this person’ would be it. If we keep our eyes off that thing for a moment, it’ll tempt Kazuma to go to some shady place to play around. It’s the living definition of the so-called ‘bad friend’.”

Glancing at the delinquent man who was still quarreling with Yunyun, I strongly insisted that we do otherwise.

More importantly, Yunyun was currently objecting with him in a dignified and mature manner. I wonder what happened between them.

I’ve heard some rumors that Yunyun has recently been associating with some strange people, but is there some connection with that thing?

I haven’t really cared until now, but I can’t help but feel a bit worried. At least, until this strange man is arrested.

“I remember now! I’ve seen that onii-san before. When I came to this town a while ago, this person suddenly bumped in an onee-san in the main street, and began to say that he broke his leg. He threatened to force the onee-san to buy him food anytime for reparations. I remember that Claire punished him afterwards...”

What the heck was this man doing?

Ultimately, it seems that he prepared to readily throw away his pride. From what I can tell from here, Dust was currently begging for alcohol money, and to achieve that, he performed a dogeza at Yunyun’s feet.

Yunyun, in an embarrassed and panicked manner, took out some money from her purse.

In some sense, performing a dogeza towards someone else in public was a type of threat.

A dragon knight who performs a dogeza towards a younger girl in public...

“...Mhm. It’s going to be useless isn’t it? Well, that person has probably gone to some other town by now, and to start with we don’t even know his name, so what can we really do? Let’s just give up. Why don’t we play around in our hideout for a bit and call it a day?”

“Boss, I think that it’s on occasions like these where information gathering becomes the important work of a thief. Was it really good for us to establish ourselves as a thieving group...”

Iris had struck where it hurts the most, but even if she says that now...”

...Hm?

“Well said Alice! That’s right, we are a thieving group, and should be seeking excellent thieves instead!”

“E-, Even if you say that Megumin-san, the fact you, a magician, are the head of a thieving group is a bit...”

“Shut up, that doesn’t matter right now! Not when I’ve found an excellent thief at with such great timing! Come on Alice, let’s go!”

Bringing the Iris – who seemed uneasy about everything – along, I rushed over to where someone I hadn’t seen in a long time was currently sitting.

Part 4

“It’s been a while, Chris. This might be a bit sudden, but I’ve made a thieving group, so please join.”

“Buba—!”

At my greeting and invitation, Chris sprayed out the milk that she was drinking.

“What are you doing? A young lady shouldn’t spray milk all over the place in public you know?”

“Keh-, Keho...! I didn’t do it on purpose! It’s just that you said something outrageous all of a sudden! Didn’t you, Megumin!?”

Chris, who I haven’t seen since the Goddess Eris Thanksgiving Festival, had

been resting with a pleased expression on her face, as though she had finished a day's work.

Seeing that, I called out to her, but...

“Even if I said something outrageous, it won't be strange for you, a thief, to belong a thieving group, right?”

“T-T-T-That's true! That's true, but...! More importantly, what do you mean by thieving group!? Megumin, could it be that you know my real identity!?”

I had a few questions regarding Chris' incomprehensible statements. Meanwhile, Iris finally caught up.

I explained my relation with Chris to Iris.

For some reason, Iris, who should be meeting Chris for the first time, tilted her head a little when she saw her.

“Uhm, you are called Chris-san right? Excuse my impoliteness, but have we met before?”

Hearing Iris suddenly say such things, Chris also tilted her head in the same fashion...”

“Did you call yourself Alice? I feel like I've seen you before somewhere... hm, aaahhh-!?”

It seems that she was familiar with the appearance of Princess Iris.

Well, regardless of Iris' subtle alias, it was impossible to hide her face.

And it shouldn't be too strange for pictures of royalty to be spread around, right?

“As expected of a well-informed thief. It seems that you have figured out Alice's true identity. She is travelling incognito, so if something were to happen, she will be in trouble, so please...?”

I thought Chris was surprised after realizing that Iris was a member of royalty, but I can't help but get the feeling that something was off with her expression.

“T-, That's right! It's because I'm a thief alright!? Someone of my level is able to recognize anyone at first sight you see! Well, since you're travelling

incognito, I won't do anything alright? W-, Well then, I have some minor business to attend to, so..."

Without a moment's delay, I grabbed onto Chris, who was about to excuse herself with some meaningless statement.

"Where are you going, Chris? I have something to ask of well-informed thief like yourself."

"H-, How should I say this? I'm a pure and righteous thief of justice that won't do anything that makes me feel guilty, so I don't think I'll be of much use to you."

Chris cast repeated glances towards Iris, and seemed to act suspiciously.

"I won't ask you to do anything in particular, Chris. I mentioned this earlier, but I am currently recruiting talented and adept members for my thieving group. We have gathered knights, archwizards, and priests, but since we're a thieving group, I would like to recruit a fundamental thief..."

"You gathered knights, archwizards, and priests? Hey, if that's the case, rather than being a thieving group, wouldn't it be more profitable for your group to just be an honest and true mercenary group? Also, it seems the people who join will go through a lot of hardship..."

Chris showed a mixed feelings about this, and turned towards Iris. As I thought, she was doubtful about Iris' presence.

Well, I can't excuse the fact that all we have is combat power. Since we don't have a thief that is fundamental for our group, I would like Chris to join us. Also, since we're searching for someone right now, we would like you to help us with that."

"A thieving group huh... Well, I've also had the experience of doing something I longed to do, so I understand how you feel ok?"

Towards Chris, who – unexpectedly – seemed to have a good vibe:

"You might not understand what I'm about to talk about, but actually, I long to create a organization that is like a certain thieving group. ...Anyway, do you know about the masked thieving group?"

“Mhm, I know about them. I probably know about them more than anyone.”

As expected of Chris. She had a web of information that only a thief would have.

I bent my body down, and lowered my voice to speak.

“Don’t tell anyone that I told you this, but all the people in my organization are people who look up to that masked thieving group. We were moved by that masked thieving group’s noble behavior, and we plan to help them from the shadows. To say it another way, we are an expansive group that is something like a fan club.”

“I see—, you’re telling me that huh—? ...Hey Megumin, I just want to confirm, but you’re not joking around right?”

Replying to Chris, who seemed to have undergone some sort of enlightenment:

“What are you saying? Of course I’m serious about this! Ah, did you thinking that helping wanted criminals was a joke? I’m just going to tell you this, but despite them being wanted, they have a reason for doing what they do.

“Ahh mhm, it’s alright. I understand what you mean, so it’s alright. Basically, in order to assist that masked thieving group, you decided made a sub-group on your own? And now, you want me to be a part of that?”

“That’s right. Please, I don’t care if you are just a provisional member. Well, in this situation, you’d start as an underling, but...”

Hearing what I said, Chris showed an expression that was a mixed of perplexment and doubt.

“A-, An underling... I will be an underling of a sub-group of the masked thieving group huh... No well, I’m fine with being a part of this alright? More importantly Megumin, I’m going to ask again, but you’re not joking about any of this are you?”

“...Why are you so full of doubt? You’ve been like this for a while now.”

“During the Goddess Eris Thanksgiving Festival, I ended up helping with the Axis cult’s stall somehow. I’m fine with this, but I was just wondering why it is

that I – despite my supposedly good luck – always find myself in these interesting situations...”

Part 5

We filled Chris, who decided to join our group in a fairly smooth fashion, in on the details regarding the dragon knight.

“If the former dragon knight had gold hair, then isn’t it that person over there?”

Saying that, Chris – of course – pointed towards Dust.

Unwilling to set Yunyun free after merely one drink, he started some sort of lecture.

If Yunyun was talking to that man about how to make acquaintances, then it would probably involve beating someone up, right?

Deeply invested into the conversation, Yunyun enthusiastically nodded her head, and began to take notes.

“You’re mistaken about that thing. Even someone as well-informed as you has some things you don’t understand I see.”

“Eh-!? B-, But, the person you’re looking for has blonde hair right? If we’re talking about blonde-haired adventurers in this town, then I can only think of him and Darkness.”

That question was already nothing new.

“The only thing the person we’re looking for and that delinquent have in common is their blonde hair. Geez, you have a bad eye for things sometimes, don’t you Chris?”

“I-, Is that so!? In this situation, I don’t want you of all people to tell me that I have a bad eye for things!”

Hearing her say that, I noticed something else.

“...You’ve been acting awfully docile for a while now. What’s the matter?”

“Yes, I’ve also had the impression that I’ve met Chris-san before, but I can’t remember where...”

“You don’t need to think too hard about! In the first place, I don’t remember meeting Alice either, so this is without a doubt the first time we’ve met!”

Chris has been acting rather turbulent for a while now, but—

“More importantly, about the person you’re looking for, my intuition tells me that it is absolutely that blonde-haired person over there. He might be carrying a sword right now, but I think that his footwork and the distance he keeps between his opponents are that of a spear user. Furthermore, from what I can see, he’s at the level of a master.”

Chris’ expression quickly turned serious. Then, Yunyun suddenly stood up, and looked directly at Dust, who seemed to have starting doing something unusual.

“Alright, look closely now. This is a method to not underestimate others, and it even works on people you’ve just met. Since you have a strong desire for friends, there’s a part of you that tries to serve or please other people. But you see, if you underestimate an adventurer, then it’s all over. This is pretty standard, but when you first meet someone, you should first decide how you approach them!”

Directly in our line of sight, Dust was squaring his shoulders as his body began to rock from side to side. As if was trying to shake off his drunkenness, he began to move.

Yunyun, seemed to be Dust’s companion, was bathed in curious gazes. Her body seemed to shrink out of embarrassment.

“...I see, so that’s the footwork of a spear master? You’re eye for observation is quite considerable indeed, Chris.”

“Why did that person do something unusual like that with such timing!?”

—After that, Dust, who gained a monopoly on curious gazes for the time being, walked out of the guild – together with Yunyun – as if nothing was out of the ordinary.

Yunyun sent countless glances towards us to signal her plea for help, but since Chris had said Dust is absolutely the person we’re looking for, I think I’ll have Yunyun accompany Dust for the time being, and we can tail them.

I sent a sign towards Yunyun to ‘keep going like this’. With a look of resignation, she walked out of the guild.

“If you didn’t say such things, Chris, we wouldn’t have had to use that girl as a sacrifice. Either way, I think you’re mistaken.”

“My intuition is telling me that his actions are just an act. I’m sure that there’s some reason that he pretends to be an idiot.”

I don’t understand why Chris was so insistent that he was not an ordinary person, but a master instead. Well, I suppose that she was familiar with a spear master herself.

My intuition is tell me that he isn’t pretending, but rather, that he’s just a simple idiot.

Not to mention, he came to my house recently to invite Kazuma to go out with him. Then, together with Aqua who was lazing around, they began talking about ‘how there were a lot of small-chested people in the Eris cult’ and other damning topics like that. Back then, he held a serious expression on his face as he brought up his personal observations.

...Then

“This is just my observation, but somehow, I feel that the way he walks is clumsy but awkward. It’s as if he’s throwing away a method that’s deeply ingrained into his body, and forcing himself to use a new method... Also, for some reason, I feel the presence of a strong person coming from over there.”

Chris was a different story, but even Iris – who was an acknowledged authority when it came to battle affairs – began to say such things.

Could it really be that man?

On the other hand, in front of us, Yunyun opened her mouth to speak to Dust, who seemed to have someplace in mind.

“Dust-san, isn’t the way you walk a bit strange today? Could it be that you have something like an injury on your foot...?”

“Oh, you can tell? My well, it’s not really an injury more than it is a bad habit. I heard this from a friend recently when we were at a café, but, uhm, how

should I say this? He taught me a method to make ‘that’ bigger after our growth period, so I’m just trying it out. It uses minced ginger and wasabi, but... Hey, don’t look at me with such a contemptful gaze. This isn’t the usual sexual harassment, so stop chanting magic please.”

Saying such disgusting statements towards a girl of tender age, Dust continued:

“To make their chests bigger, girls drink a lot milk and massage their chests and other things like that right? You know, Guys have the dream to be huge. You have dreams too right? Making friends is your dream, and being huge is my dream. Aren’t both of them wonderful dreams?”

—A young girl would earnestly dream to have friends that would be together for a long time, and a boy would dream to be a big man one day.

Shouting that ‘I won’t let you taint my childhood dreams’, Yunyun grabbed onto Dust, and began to fight.

Overseeing the situation—

“The observational skills of the two of you are amazing. So the reason for his clumsy footsteps is as he said.”

Hearing what I said, the two of them who had been commentating with confidence earlier, moved their hands to cover their face.

Part 6

“Yunyun got angry and went home as well, so is there still any meaning in tailing him? The impression I get from that man is that he’s an amazingly hopeless person.”

After her pure childhood dreams were placed into the same category as that despicable dream, Yunyun went home in tears.

Partly due to Chris’ stubbornness, we continued to tail Dust.

“My intuition is telling me that something has to be up with that person. Despite how it’s been, I have an eye for people you know? Like, I can see through that person’s true nature... Well, I’m not in my normal condition right now, so I can’t say for sure.

I don't know what she meant by her 'normal condition', but if she really had a good eye for people, that means that – despite being a devout Eris cultist – Chris ignored the presence of Vanir and Wiz at the Eris Thanksgiving Festival closing ceremony.

“I'm just a bit curious, Chris, but what do you think of undead and devils?”

“It would be great if they were exterminated.”

She immediately answered.

“Let's say that it was a human that could only fulfill their wish by becoming an undead, and that they love humanity at heart. Or say, a devil that is unexpectedly not a bad person...”

“It would be great if they were exterminated without exception.”

What an exemplar Eris cultist.

Is this what people call 'unapproachable'?

<TL Note: The phrase Megumin uses here is 取りつく島もない (tori tsuku shima mo nai), which translates to 'there's not even an island to latch onto'. In this instance, it describes Chris as showing a cold attitude, without even leaving a choice to reply.>

I wonder if she thought that Vanir was just a slightly strange person? Well, with this, I finally understood just how blind Chris was to everything.

Then just as Chris returned a puzzled expression towards my questions—

“Ah, please look at that thing you two!”

At Iris' call, we looked towards where she pointed to. Dust had scattered the crows at the garbage dump, and was looking around to confirm that no one else was present.



“What, is he a serious person like I thought he was? Look there, he’s doing good things without letting people know. He turned his eyes through the area to confirm that no one else is here, and started cleaning up the garbage dump.

That's something that no ordinary person would do right? I suppose he matches up to quite a few of our requirements!"

...No.

"I see, he's going through all the unsorted trash and classifying them properly. I misunderstood that person didn't I!? About the way he interacts with females, surely there are some circumstances...!"

The two of them were currently forming an even greater misunderstanding. What that thing was doing was fishing through the trash and sorting through what could be sold and what couldn't be sold.

"See Megumin? My eye for observation isn't something worthless right?"

I thought that she was just as blind as Aqua.

"Please look! Not only is he sorting through the trash, he's even making them look pretty. The personality of the former dragon knight from that story was serious, honest, and persevering as well..."

Iris, who was unfamiliar with the matters regarding trash, seemed to be forming some sort of weird misunderstanding, but well, it not like she had or ever will fish through trash.

Keeping the valuables to himself, Dust beautifully cleaned up the garbage dump with a pleased expression plastered on his face. Then, with the items in hand, Dust quickly went to the nearby dealer store.

"Those were the things that were thrown away right? Although those items were placed at a garbage dump, is it a good thing for him to take things that were thrown away and convert that to money?"

Hearing Iris' question, Chris replied.

"W-, Well, those were things that were thrown away. I suppose that, rather than having those things to remain as garbage, it would be better for the world if it those things were to be used again..."

Ignoring what those two said.

"It seems like they started fighting over the purchase value of those things... Ah, I'm not sure if the store bought it at a cheap price, but he just kicked the

trash can flying out of spite. The trash is all over the place!”

““ ””

The two of them, who had been casted triumphant expressions as they praised Dust, quickly moved to cover their flushed faces.

—Having not learned our lesson, we continued to tail Dust after that.

“Come on Megumin, look! He’s helping a girl that’s been solicited by an unknown adventurer! This time he’s doing a good act...!”

“...It seems that he wants a gift from helping her, and this time he’s the one to solicit her instead.”

Noticing the police nearby, he quickly ran away.

“...Oh, it seems like Dust dropped his wallet.”

“He did. We shouldn’t do anything since we’re tailing him, but if we don’t at least notify him... Hm, someone who was talking behind him picked it up and gave it to him, isn’t that great!?”

“Hm, ah-!? He said ‘my wallet should’ve been placed in a deeper place, you pulled it out!’ and started a fight!”

After starting a fight with the onii-san that went through all the trouble to return his wallet to him, he noticed the police coming by, and ran away again.

“This is the chance! The newbie adventurers are practicing the spear at the open space in town! As a super proficient spear user, he’ll surely have some sort of reaction...!”

“...He didn’t even bat an eye. Rather, he just walked right past them while picking his nose.”

“...That’s a bit of an extreme example. For a while now, I’ve noticed that, despite there being other adventurers swinging in town, the policemen seem to be unwilling to keep their eyes off him.

That feeling was just Dust’s good-for-nothing characteristic at work.

After witnessing the shameful and nasty acts of the town’s infamous ‘number one person to be cautious of’, his final destination was—

“—Then, acting as a decoy to protect the other adventurers from danger, I – with bold resolution – jumped in front of the Kowloon Hydra and got killed. After that, I was sent to where goddess Eris was you see? In reality, the goddess Eris was more divine looking than this you know?”

“Ooh...! I also wish to meet Eris-sama, but I do not believe that such a wish will be fulfilled during my natural lifespan. Purposely going to a dangerous place and treating my life poorly would be against the wishes of Eris-sama. Ah, I’m so jealous that you were able to meet Eris-sama...!”

After prowling around down and causing trouble for the people he met, Dust returned to the adventurer’s guild. There, he solicited an Eris cultist ojii-san that appeared to be a priest, and began to tell his shady tale.

It was true that the souls who faced deaths unrelated to one’s lifespan, such as being killed by a monster, would be sent to goddess Eris.

Thus, it wouldn’t be strange for Dust, who had been killed by the Kowloon Hydra, to have seen goddess Eris once, but...

“And then you see, the goddess Eris told me this. ‘You are not destined to die here. After all, you are fated to help the hero that will defeat the demon king. Now, return to the present world, and give a helping hand to the hero that will save the world. And so I wish for you to bring light upon this world...’ ya know?”

“Oh my, Eris-sama did such a thing! It seems like you carry the great burden of destiny! If there’s anything I can assist you with, please feel free to tell me!”

I was truly suspicious about what he said, but for some reason, when Chris saw the priest’s forthcoming, moved feelings, she began to act fidgety.

Chris, who was a devout Eris cultist, was probably jealous of that man, right?

Dust downed the beer, which I think he was given in exchange for more stories about Eris, in one breath. Then, showing a smile to the kind-looking priest...

“Oh, is that so? Actually, I really want to fight alongside the hero in order to save the world, but I’m totally broke you know.... I thought that there wouldn’t be any devout Eris cultist somewhere who would be willing to be my patron for the sake of the world, but...”

“Hey what do you think you’re saying————!”

Chris grabbed onto Dust.

Part 7

“Geez, I was just a tiny step away from having it work out, so what did you do that for? And you are that person right? The thief that got sent home crying when Kazuma laid your panties bare the first time you met.”

“I-I-, I didn’t cry! And that was just an accident anyway!”

At a corner of the adventurer’s guild, we bought Dust some food.

Chris, who had suddenly become infuriated, grabbed onto Dust, and said that he had ‘obstructed her business’ as a fictitious excuse to take him away. For some reason, in the aftermath, Chris ended up being the one angrily treating Dust to a meal, but...

“Boss, is it true that Onii-sama stripped Chris-san’s Panties? Taking into account that you said that you had taken a bath with onii-sama before, may I ask what exactly does onii-sama do on a regular basis?”

“That’s just how he normally operates. Not to mention that recently, in the private room of the bathroom of our mansion, he had taken off Darkness’ underwear.”

“Just how could that kind of situation occur!?”

I indoctrinated Iris regarding just how much sexual harassment Kazuma was guilty of. On the other hand, since Chris was buying Dust began to order food without reserve.

“By the way, what were you guys following behind me today for? Could it be that you guys are my fans?”

“There’s no way that a person benevolent enough to be your fan exists... Rather, you noticed our presence? I might not have used the hide skill, but it’s just like I thought isn’t it? You’re not just an ordinary person huh.”

Having still not given up on the notion that Dust was a former dragon knight, Chris asked a leading question in a provoking manner.

“No. It’s not like you guys aren’t eye-catching enough as it is, but if you’re going to go as far as to make a big fuss, then anyone’s gonna notice right?”

“W-, Well, I don’t really care about that. More importantly, you, it’s not a good think to spread false rumors about meeting the goddess Eris kay! You might even receive punishment for that kay!”

To think that the Chris, who usually had a gentle image, was this devout of an Eris cultist.

Dust, who was on the receiving end of Chris’ anger, showed a composed expression.

“Oi oi, how do you know that I was lying? It’s not like you’ve met the goddess Eris before right? Well, of course, since you can’t meet her until you die.”

“That is... I-, I mean, for goddess Eris to do say something that seems like foresight, there’s no...”

Feeling that her situation had taken a turn for worse, Chris awkwardly turned her eyes away.

Then, as if guided by her curiosity, Iris came forth.

“What is Eris-sama like? Does she look like she is in the drawings?”

“Oh, you haven’t seen it haven’t you? Goddess Eris is just as exaggerated as what the Axis cult’s rumors say. Those things were undoubtedly pads... eh, AAhhhhHH!?”

Dust, who said things deserving of punishment, turned to face Iris.

“Hey wait, don’t tell people about things such as pads or pads!”

“Shut up, I can tell anyone I want about the goddess’ breast pads! Oi you, , the kid who was with boss Vanir right!? That scary bodyguard isn’t here today is she!?”

“Erm, if you’re talking about Claire, then she isn’t here at the moment.”

Now that I think about it, Iris did say something like that a while ago.

“Hey, please just stop talking about the breast pads! It’s wrong to make a hoax about goddess Eris, you’ll really be punished you know!?”

Seeing Chris slam the table in response, Dust seemed to be amused. Showing a wickedly smug expression, he said.

“Like I said, you don’t have any evidence that I’m lying. You know, goddess Eris seemed to have fell in love with me at first sight you know? There’s no mistaking that gaze.”

“You’re wrong! She was just looking at you for eyes of pity since you died in such an incredibly stupid way!”

“Don’t say disrespectful things just ‘cause you want to see her yourself. Thank me for bravely charging into the Kowloon Hydra instead!”

“Didn’t you just charge back in on your own when you tried to hog all the achievements for yourself!?”

Although neither were willing to retreat from this dispute, it seems there would be a temporary reprieve from this topic as Dust’s orders arrived.

“...And? Well, back on topic. Why were you guys tailing me?”

“Actually, we are making a thieving group in order to achieve a certain goal. Then, we heard of a rumor that there was a handsome, blonde-haired, super-skilled adventurer in this town, and we were thinking about scouting him. After asking the receptionist onee-san, we found out that you were the only blonde-haired adventurer in this town. So then, we wanted to test your true abilities...”

Dust, who stuffed his face with food, told a large gulp from his drink, and in a show of poor manners, he pointed his fork towards us and said.

“A handsome and super-skilled adventurer? Geez, regardless of which one of you guys, all of you are showing such a ‘duh’ expression. You guys are trying to pick up some handsome adventurer and use them to poke at Kazuma after all.”

“Y-, You’re mistaken, we’re not trying to pick up guys alright!? I don’t care about whether or not they’re handsome! There just happened to be this kind of rumor!”

For some reason, Chris replied in a flustered manner. Dust sent a dubious gaze in our direction, and said:

“Uhm, so what kind of guy is that bastard you’re looking for? It doesn’t seem

like this thief that got her panties stolen has any clue, but despite how I look, I know all about the adventurers of this town. There are quite a few of them who have dyed their hair you see? So, tell me a bit about that guy's personality would ya?"

"A super-skilled handsome man, who is serious, compassionate, and has the ability to persevere through hardship. He is a man that all young girls long for."

".....Does that kind of guy even exist in this world??"

Towards Dust, who seemed to carry quite a bit of doubt.

"If we're talking about the people nearby, would it be someone like that weird onii-chan called Mitsu... Something like that at least. But can that guy persevere? I touched the butt of the onee-chan that follows him around a little, and he got really mad."

We have truly, truly mistaken this person for someone else.

Then, Iris, who listened intently, said.

"Uhm, I have something I want to ask you. May I?"

"Huh? What is it small kid? Just to let you know, unlike Kazuma, I'm not a lolicon alright?"

"Please don't call onii-sama a lolicon! No, that's not what I wanted to say... Uhm, are you able to use a spear?"

Hearing the word 'spear', Dust's eyebrows rose in surprise. Then, he began to awkwardly scratch his head.

"I..."

"Alice-samaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!"

As the words seemed like it would roll off the tip of his tongue, a resounding cry of angst rung through the guild, and interrupted the moment.

The voice belonged to no other than Iris bodyguard, Claire.

"AAhh—! You, aren't you that weird girl that almost slashed me to bits a while back!"

"AAhh—! You're the insolent playboy from that time! You, after all that, are

you finally planning to lay your sinister fangs on Alice-sama...!”

“You liar! Oi small kid, didn’t you just say that this girl wasn’t here!”

“E-, Even if you say that...”

Terrified of Claire, Dust complained to Iris, and ran away from the guild.

—After seeing Iris off together with Chris, it was rather late, so I decided that it would be best if we called it a day, but...

“In the end, we didn’t find the rumored dragon knight. Well, in exchange, we got Chris to join us, so it’s all good.”

“I suppose that a skilled adventurer like that doesn’t have a reason to stay in the town of beginners anyway. But well, it seems like I misunderstood that person named Dust. And here I thought that I had an eye for people you see.”

Seeing that she hasn’t noticed the presence of Vanir and Wiz that stood out greatly in this town, I suppose it wouldn’t be wrong to say that that eye was simply blind.

“But I wonder why that dragon knight kidnapped the princess? If it was what Alice-chan had told us, then it might be a truly wonderful story. I wonder what exactly happened?”

“Well, everyone has a secret or two to keep to themselves. Even I have things that Kazuma hasn’t seen you see?”

When Crimson Magic clansmen are born, we each have a number engraved on our body at a different place from everyone else.

In my situation... Well, I suppose you could say that it is somewhere that people wouldn’t see...

“Hey Megumin, as a girl, it’s wrong to expose yourself to other people so easily ok?”

“I’m not talking about anything obscene like that! More importantly, you have at least one secret you want to keep right?”

Hearing what I said, Chris showed a small smile.

“In my case, I probably have two secrets that I’m keeping from you,

Megumin... Also, I have a secret that I share with Kazuma as well.”

“Oho? Is that a challenge to me? Is that a challenge? Fine, recently, it’s been quite an eyesore to see that man cast lecherous gazes towards his companions anyway. Come at me anytime!”

“W-W-W-, Wait a second, that’s not what I meant!”

Part 8

Seeing that Cecily was still asleep when I returned to the hideout, I left a message for her to let her know that I had gone home for the day. It seems that Cecily was completely ready to move into there, but I suppose that it’s better to have someone there than to leave it empty.

Today, we gained a brilliant thief.

Yes, we were finally able to get our long-awaited thief.

I can’t help but feel that we did nothing but wander around today, but I suppose that we’ve finally done something that was characteristic of a true thieving group.

How should I say this? Since everyone has their own, unique personality, it was truly burdensome task to get ourselves back on track with what we should be doing.

Now that I had that experience myself, I’ve begun to think that Kazuma might actually be an amazing person.

—Then, returning home whilst reflecting on such things, the visage of a certain man came into view.

The beginner adventurers that began to practice spear at the empty lot in town, continued to swing their spears without paying heed to whether the sky was dark or not.

From a short distance, Dust had started fixatedly at those beginner adventurers.

I wonder what kind of needless dabbling he’ll do this time.

After confirming that there was no police in the area, Dust walked up to the

newbie adventurers.

“...Oi, let me borrow your spear for a moment. Let me show you how it’s really done.”

And he had said something completely unexpected.

Perhaps the adventurer that had been called out too didn’t know of Dust’s infamy, but he rubbed the dripping sweat off the spear, and earnestly handed it over to Dust.

As if he were confirming out the length and condition of the spear, he swung the spear around for a while, yet it already seemed like a sudden demonstration.

Even a complete amateur like myself could tell the refinement in his movements

The newbie adventurers stopped their sweaty hands, and probably had their mouths wide open in surprise.

The sound of the spear cutting through the air gradually became sharper and sharper, and the adventurers gulped loudly on their saliva.

As if the surrounding air was being compressed, the atmosphere gradually became tenser and tenser.

Looking at Dust, who swung the spear with fearful amounts of concentration, I began to wonder where the usually hopeless human had disappeared to. Finally he set up his spear posture, and whilst maintaining it, he lowered his waist deeply, and——

“—I’m home!”

“Welcome back—. Tonight we’re having your favorite sukiyaki Megumin. Aqua’s been pestering me to hurry up this entire time, so go wash your hands quickly.”

<TL Note: Suki-yaki is cooking thin slices of meat (typically beef) on a cast iron pan/plate.>

Saying that, Kazuma brought the gently simmering saucepan over. So he was in charge of food today hm?

Aqua was already seated, and Darkness, who had been waiting for me to everyone to arrive, poured wine into everyone's glasses.

"Kazuma, could I ask you something real quick?"

"Oh, what's up all of a sudden? ...Haha-n, do you want to hear what time I slept last night?"

Perhaps our promise was a while back was weighing on his mind, but Kazuma sudden said such things, as if he was playing the role of the funny-man.

"No, that's not what I want to ask. Uhm... do you have a something that you're keeping private from someone else? I guess you could call it a secret or something like that."

"A secret? Of course I have a lot of secrets. Rather, is there anyone who doesn't have a secret?"

...Well, I guess that's true.

Since I'm still shocked by the sight that I saw earlier, I ended up asking a stupid question.

Was Dust actually that person?

The last technique of his still left a vivid impression in my mind.

Even if I brought one million eris and asked him to teach me that, I might find myself completely overwhelmed.

"What's with you Megumin? By the way, I'm not keeping anymore secrets. Since I believe in you guys, I've told you everything there is to know."

Seeing that I was troubled, Darkness showed a gentle smile towards me.

"Didn't you say that a bit too shamelessly? You joined our party whilst keeping your identity as an ojou-sama a secret from us, and you even kept the fact that you were getting married a secret from us, and cause a big mess you know?"

And she was immediately crushed by Kazuma. Tears could be seen forming in her eyes.

Then, Aqua, who was restlessly waiting for the sukiyaki meat to cook, said.

“Oh my, I have a secret as well you know? Yes, I’ve wanted to make this clear to everyone.”

“Oi you, you’re just gonna say that you’re a goddess again right? The two of them aren’t going to believe you, so...”

“Actually, it’s almost been a year since our party was formed. Kazuma bought an expensive bottle of wine to celebrate, but since I failed to endure it any longer, I already drank it!”

Hearing what Aqua said, Kazuma reflexively came to a complete stop.

“Sowwee!”

“What are you ‘sowwee’ about, do you think I’m an idiot! That’s not what you call a secret, but rather something you want to keep hidden! ...Oi, your eyes are totally flooded. As of now, I’m not the type of person to get angry, but rather, the type of person who will wait-and-see. You definitely have bigger things that you’re keeping hidden right!? Tell me you little-!”

...Well, whatever.

The fact that I’ve made a thieving group was still a secret I’m keeping from Kazuma.

Ignoring the two who started to squabble—

Darkness tilted her wine glass to one side, and – with her good mood being apparent – she asked me.

“By the way Megumin, you’ve recently doing something with a various group of people right? What did you do today?”

What did we do today?

Well, I suppose I did gain an underling today, but if I had to choose...

“Today, I saw an unexpected side of various people. If the people in question say it’s fine to tell you, then I will you all about it. I’m sure that you’ll be surprised.”

Iris and Yunyun were quite alike, but what exactly did this princess-sama have in mind? I’ll be sure to ask her another time.

Misc. Notes:

- Megumin's 'number' refers to the mark on her butt-ish area that Kazuma saw a glimpse of on Megumin in the bath scene in Volume 2
- Vanir points out that 'Dust' is not his real name in Consulting Chapter 1.
- The way Iris talks about the story is really important, and it directly leads into volume 10. Maybe she wants her Onii-sama to take her away?
- Finally, for reference, the correct reading (release) order is:

Main Volumes 1-4

Explosion Volume 1

Main Volume 5

Explosion Volume 2

Main Volume 6

Explosion Volume 3

Main Volume 7-8

Consulting Volume 1

Main Volume 9

Continued Volume 1, Chapter 1-3

Main Volume 10

Continued Chapter 4 – end

Chapter 4: The Striking Thieving Group

(Megumin PoV. “Big Boss” in this chapter refers to Megumin)

Part 1

...At the rally point that has become of our secret base...

Chris, seeing our thieving group’s invitation list, said,

“I don’t get it.”

I turned my head to Chris, who’s staring stiffly.

“What do you mean ‘you don’t get it’? This is a list of people to join our thieving group.”

“I don’t get how there’s so many people! I don’t get how the most luxurious mansion in Axel became our base, and how this list is filled with famous adventurers!”

What is this underling implying?

“What’s so surprising? Isn’t being a big organization a good thing?”

“Well, you’re not wrong—no, how is that any good!? Hey, does Kazuma-kun know about this?”

I said to the inexplicably panicked underling,

“I have indeed told Kazuma about my followers and our base.”

“R-really? So he understands? ...Eh? Am I the only one who feels this is all blown way out of proportion?”

Chris is really quite shortsighted, very befitting of the “underling” title.

“Scared of our ambitious size? Heh, this is but a walk in the park for someone like me.”

“Haha...ha... y-you sure are capable.”

Chris glanced at me with terrified and shocked eyes.

Then suddenly—

“Megumin is actually scared by the sheer scale herself...”

Yunyun, who had been skillfully building a card tower, rudely rained on my parade.

“Oi, if you don’t want me to destroy the fruit of your entire morning’s worth of work, you better keep your mouth shut.”

“I-I understand. Look... I’m trying to improve my old record for card towers here, please be careful...”

Before I noticed, Yunyun’s single-player gaming skills have soared. Just what is she going for?

“Well...”

Chris looked awkwardly—

“Who is the person that had been stalking me since the beginning?”

—at Cecily, peeking from behind the sofa.

Cecily supposedly loves little girls, but she’s been oddly cautious towards Chris.

“The onee-san over there who refuses to leave is the priest Cecily... Onee-san, what’s going on? You usually behave strangely, but your strangeness reached a whole new level today.”

But she continued to stare suspiciously at Chris.

“I’m not sure what’s wrong myself. Onee-san’s loli radar hasn’t responded at all, for the first time in history. Hey, you aren’t some sort of expert cross-dresser, are you? Not that I mind traps... still, something is amiss.”

“I do get called a boy occasionally because I wear shorts, but I’m definitely a girl.”

Chris looked depressed, probably from her history of gender misidentification. After all, she has short hair and dresses messily.

“Ah, Chris is an Eris cultist, could that be the reason for the hostility?”

Hearing the term “Eris cult”, Cecily sprang up from behind the sofa.

“Unacceptable! Eris cultists are not tolerated inside my holy land of cute lolis! Hehe, must be jealous of me getting so many little girls just by lazing through my days, aren’t you? Wanna steal my harem throne? No way! Disgusting thief!”

“‘Disgusting thief’!? O-oi, hold on, I think there’s some sort a misunderstanding. I was forced to join, not to mention—”

Cecily wouldn’t leave Chris alone. She must be extremely prejudiced against Eris worshippers.

“Anyways, Yunyun, isn’t Alice coming?”

“I went to the usual meeting spot, her servant told me she had some ceremony to attend to... he-hey, don’t blow on my card tower! Speaking of Alice, Megumin, I’m very skeptical of her real identity now...”

So that’s how it is. Tending to royal matters.

I was going to give a “criminal activity briefing” once enough members arrive, but now it’s impossible.

“Guess there’s not much she could do. It’s royal duties after all, dragging her out would have catastrophic consequences.”

“H-hey, Megumin, please tell me who Alice really is... why are you looking away? Why did even Chris-chan turn her head on me? Hey, stop shaking! My tower is gonna fall!”

I shook Yunyun’s shoulder to shut her up.

“Now that we have a proper thief, guess it’s time to discuss our first strike. We’ll attack when Alice has time! Before then, we must find a suitable target; the plans are—” I violently slapped the planning sheet onto the table “—as follows!”

“Waaaah, my tower! Hold on a second! Ahhhhh!”

—That night...

After we finished dinner at home, I asked Kazuma about something.

“‘What’s the secret to management?’ What kind of question is that?”

Although we are only striking a noble’s home, the members of our thieving

group are still too absurd.

So, I've come to seek advice from the master of handling insane people, Kazuma—

This is how it went..

“There's no secret, plus I don't believe I'm that good at managing. Even a summoner can't be so precise about commanding his beasts. I'm only providing general guidance, giving you some pointers.”

“Just general guidance, huh. Glad to have you commanding our whole party.”

“Look, you won't listen even if I do give the details. A ‘ranker’ like me can totally analyze the situation and come up with strategies on the spot. When I was back at home, my guild had many more far hairier problems.”

“‘Ranker’ means... someone high levelled? Kazuma had teammates, right? You told us you used to ravage and conquer together, things like taking out bosses.”

One of the many mysteries of Kazuma.

He claims to have farmed monsters and killed bosses day and night with numerous friends, having gained quite some fame.

“Yeah, I guess I could count as an admin of the guild. I was responsible for helping new members and scheduling boss battles. Maybe I learned my management skills for you bunch from those experiences.”

Kazuma was full of confidence.

I couldn't say he's lying no matter how many times I hear it.

“If you really want strategies that badly, it's to not repel others in times of hardship, but to understand them.”

“...Oi, Kazuma, why are you staring at me?”

So that's how. Understanding.

“Thanks a lot, I'll have a chat with everyone tomorrow.”

“Yeah, no matter how shitty someone is, they always have strengths. You'll find them useful after all when you find their spark. Even if it takes leaving a

careless member behind in a dungeon—after some observation, you will find their good side.”

“Oi, as I said, why are you still staring at me...”

Their good side.

To say, I really don’t understand those people well.

“For ace players like me, this is merely a type of handicap. After life becomes easy, I won’t get mad even if you guys leave me behind.”

Hearing Kazuma’s arrogant speech, the captivated Darkness—who had been stroking Chomusuke—reacted.

“Oi, Kazuma, please don’t broadcast degenerate thoughts like that.”

“The handicapping game I talked about is not like your masochistic ones—don’t blame the victim.”

Still, becoming a staff for a guild at this age is substantial; maybe he really is extraordinary.

Just as I was admiring Kazuma, Aqua beside him—who had been concentrating in feeding Emperor Zell—said,

“When you were describing us like hazards, I was not included, right? You were definitely implying those two, right?”

“What are you talking about... You’re the most significant hazard.”

With Chomusuke biting her fingertip, the satisfied Darkness followed,

“Oi, Kazuma, I’m definitely not a problem, am I? I’m clearly the most normal out of the three...”

...Hold on a second.

“Where did that confidence come from? To me, your intelligence is barely above that of goblins.”

“You, come have a walk with me outside. You dare call the beautiful, smart me a goblin!?”

“Ahh, this guy has recently been becoming more and more unbearable.

Calling cute girls goblins is unforgivable; you merely defeated a few Demon King Generals.”

They instantly started to focus-aggro at Kazuma, basically like goblins.

“You two are without doubt the problem. Out of the three, the calmest and the most knowledgeable member is me. After all, calmness is a major selling point for archwizards... say, this is getting out of hand. I was planning to manage a treacherous bunch, now I see that everyone is too opinionated; I have zero confidence in taming them...”

“Y-you, the one who would explode without any spark, have the audacity to call yourself calm!?”

“Megumin, I’m confident that I’m much calmer during battles.”

“I’m not OK with being told this by the least patient member of all, Megumin!”

What the hell are those three saying. With my arms folded, I pretended not to hear anything.

Part 2

“I have a question onee-san: what do you wish for the most?”

“Marrying Megumin, probably.”

The following morning.

Cecily answered instantly. She’s been doing weird dances since dawn.

“...Um, about that. I’m a girl, so I won’t be marrying onee-san.”

The weird dance looks like some form of prayer to Aqua, she’s been saying “Aqua-sama, please bless me with another beautiful day”.

“Unlike the corrupt Eris cult, us Axis cultists have no prejudice against sexual or special preferences, any non-devil and non-undead are marriageable.”

“Er, I appreciate your tolerance, but I prefer to marry as a bride, so I can’t be with onee-san.”

“Guess I can’t help it then. I’ll go the extra mile and become the groom!”

“That’s not what I meant! I mean like... marrying a man! D-don’t be so depressed, I’d have no choice but to pity you if you frown like that!”

Bearing the face of an abandoned puppy, Cecily left me conflicted. She suddenly started to giggle.

“Pitying me? Would you look at that... my Megumin is simply too cute! Looks like it can’t be helped; I heard that there is a gender-changing divine tool. For Megumin, I’ll find it at all costs!”

“Even if onee-san becomes onii-san doesn’t mean I’ll marry you... please don’t be like this! Do you have nothing better to think about? The onee-san that daydreams all the time must have many other goals, surely?”

I forcefully pushed away the Cecily that has been hugging me and rubbing our cheeks together.

“What do you mean Megumin...? I’m an Axis priest after all!”

“...? And? I know that.”

I don't understand.

"Axis cultists do whatever they think of immediately. To not ruin Goddess Aqua's image, we live carefree every day, do whatever we think of. Like right now!"

Cecily hugged me and giggled.

"Even though your deeds aren't exactly good, your lifestyle is still worth some respect. Full of freedom, full of Axis spirit."

"Thanks a bunch! I think Megumin's firecracker-like lifestyle isn't bad either!"

Oh please don't put it that way.

Cecily said as she patted my head,

"All aside, you can tell any worries to onee-san, alright? After all I'm here to chat with you!"

She's never changed, still perceptive as ever.

Indeed, the problem that's been bothering me recently is—

"Megumin likes someone... right? Nothing came of the last time we talked about it."

Just how am I supposed to lead this team of degenerates to successfully take down a target?

"N-n-not true! I was thinking about how to complete the current mission. I never thought about things like that!"

Cecily's surprisingly intricate observations made my whole face go red.

The sweetly smiling Cecily looked like an actual saint.

It's because of her rare, gentle side that we have no way to hate her, despite her interests.

"If I kept playing around, you might actually hate me; so, I'll believe you for now! —You're right. We need to first confirm which noble we're striking, and how we should execute it. We also want the type who did really shady deeds, so that even if we strike, they couldn't make a huge fuss out of it. In other words, we want the nobles that are reasonably famous, reasonably wealthy and

have done nasty things!”

Makes sense. Even though I hated her harassment, her logic was still strangely flawless.

“Having said that, I actually have had a target in mind the moment I found out about Megumin’s plans!”

“What happened to you today, onee-san? You seem oddly reliable.”

What has gotten to her head, today?

Same with that Dust pervert, it seems like like Axis cult also occasionally has their trustworthy side.

I looked at her hopefully, wishing to know about that noble...

“Do you know the ‘Dustiness’ family?”

“... ..”

I had no words. Cecily, however, got excited.

“Since stronger opponents are better; Dustiness definitely fits the bill there. As for wealth—they’re one of the richest in the whole kingdom, definitely workable.”

Can’t call them poor, sure, but they’re not so rich either in the realm of royalty.

“More importantly, they’re a devout Eris worshipping family! Filled with evil Eris cultists, they must have done terrible deeds behind our backs!”

“Sorry, but let’s not bother them. I’m begging you.”

I was so young to believe that Cecily might have a shred of reliability.

“Since Megumin disagrees, I can’t persist... but I also have a second choice, why don’t we start there?”

Part 3

“Behaim family?...Uh, aren’t they a little too difficult for newcomers? There’s not much info about them, and they have tight defenses. I wouldn’t recommend them.”

I met Chris wandering around at the guild this afternoon, so I asked her about the nobles.

“You mentioned ‘too difficult for newcomers’; the way you put it makes yourself sound like an expert at infiltrating noble mansions!”

“Pffft!” Chris coughed up her wine. “That...! Uh, I’m a professional thief, so even if I don’t steal anything, I should at least scout out the area, right?”

She explained in a hurry.

That’s how it is. As an explosion mage, I, too, subconsciously look for big and hard, obliteration-worthy objects. It seems I’m not the only one with this mindset.

Chris wiped her mouth with her handkerchief.

“I will carefully inspect the Behaim household; although, you should choose smaller families first, alright? If you hit a large family that is a public enemy due to numerous crimes, they won’t report for theft even if you were successful. That way, you’ll never gain recognition.”

“Let me ask this first; these are all hypothetical, right? You’ve never actually stole from nobles...”

“N-n-n-never! Gee Megumin, how could I do something so dangerous?”

Chris is saying that, but her face turned away. Seems like she’s a bad liar.

She kept folding and unfolding the handkerchief, clearly unable to calm herself.

“...Aren’t you an Eris cultist, Chris? Can you swear to Goddess Eris that you’ve never done dangerous tasks like ‘infiltrating a noble’s mansion’?”

“Er... I-I can! I swear... Er, this feeling of not knowing how to answer is sure

interesting...”

Chris’ remorseless vow also surprised me.

She’s supposed to be a devout Eris believer, so she shouldn’t be lying.

Looks like I was worrying for nothing.

“Right, I have another question. What do you wish to do the most? What is your ultimate dream?”

“Mine? My dream? ...Eh, Megumin, do you really not know who I truly am? Rather than having a wish to be made true, I’m more of the type that makes others’ wishes come true... you know what I’m saying?”

Chris said something weird again.

And here I thought she was the most normal one out of our whole group. Guess that isn’t true after all.

“I actually sought help from Kazuma. He said the secret to organizing a team is to fully understand them. Simply put, I want to understand you more.”

Chris stared at me with disbelief.

“Hey, that’s some deep words from Kazuma. As for my wishes... my bucket list... I’m already doing what I love, so I have nothing to dream of for now.”

“Doing what you love huh... Cecily said the same thing. It seems that the Axis and Eris cults really aren’t that different.”

“Hold up, let me answer that again! I’ll be serious this time!”

Probably unable to bear being compared to the Axis cultists, Chris threw a tantrum.

After some thinking, Chris shyly said,

“What I want to do... is to shop with some girl friends, buy a bunch of clothes, eat at popular restaurants and buffets... That’s about it, some slice of life things.”

She listed some surprisingly girly activities despite being a tomboy.

“You could do that any time, unlike the lonely Yunyun and noble-blooded

Alice. From an adventurer's point of view, a female thief's life is all party and alcohol."

"What an outrageous description! I-I've never even went on a date!"

I originally thought that Chris, Kazuma's partner of stripping play on the first day they've met, would be more sexually mature, but she is unexpectedly innocent.

So that's how it is. Kazuma was very correct.

Cecily or Chris, they all have a lesser known side.

Speaking of dates...

I haven't ever gone on 1-on-1 dates either.

.....

"I suddenly thought of another question."

"What's up? I'm old friends with Darkness and I have had various incidents with Aqua. With Kazuma-kun also being someone I share secrets with—I've just noticed that out of the party, you're the only one whom I haven't talked with much. If you have questions, ask on!"

Swaying her beer mug, she lightheartedly said.

"What is your true relationship with our Kazuma?"

"...Friends...I guess."

I closed some distance with Chris, who's now avoiding my gaze.

"Aren't you two a bit too close for friends? In addition, didn't you mention that you don't know me well, Chris? How then, would you have major interactions with Kazuma?"

"Eh... about that... Look, I taught him some thief skills, then all kinds of stuff happened! He's really just a friend! I have no special feelings for him!"

Her reaction gave it all away, plus that "sharing secrets" part caught my attention.

"The only girls he's met were us three from the party, though he became

quite a celebrity recently. Putting aside the women he's been with since the start, I can't let a wild thief out of nowhere take him from me."

The quietly listening Chris blushed and returned a statement.

"Heh, I heard Megumin had been getting along very well with Kazuma. Hey, you like him, right? How true is your love? Let's hear about it!"

"I love Kazuma. If you say how serious, I'd say pretty damn serious."

Chris' blushing intensified, she's losing her cool.

"In the beginning he was a weirdo, but later I found him reliable and very caring. I guess that's the 'gradually fall in love' trope. To me, Kazuma's everyday life became as important as explosion magic."

"I... I-Is that so? Megumin is secretly really assertive. I keep thinking you would be more bashful... your answers are so direct, I don't know how to respond..."

For whatever reason, her look became more respectful.

"Like this, I would kill off any affection towards my Kazuma while they're still budding. You and Kazuma are really just friends?"

"We're definitely friends! You can stop being so jealous! Er, I'll go scout out Behaim's home now!"

(TL note: Pun. In Chinese, red-eyed means jealous.)

Chris hastily and shakily left the guild.

I also left the Adventurer's Guild for my next destination.

Yunyun should be bringing that child over.

Part 4

“Th-this is really cute! Look, there, too!”

“Indeed, I’ve never been to this kind of store, so I’m very excited...Say, Yunyun-chan, shouldn’t we head back to base now?”

At a streetside store that particularly appealed to girls...

Two familiar figures were wandering about.

“No problem, everyone’s probably having snacks and slacking off. Cecily-san will be angering Megumin, Chris-san will be bitterly giggling elsewhere... Actually, they might be having an equally great time.”

“Shall we go then? Shopping is fun and all, but if the Big Boss finds out, we’ll definitely be scolded.”

Yunyun is slightly concerned.

“Y-you’re right. A-although I’m not afraid of Megumin, it can’t be good to have her wait for long, so let’s...”

“Oi, taking the loli around the town to achieve your own shopping goals aside, those are some bold statements to make.”

Yunyun stiffened at my voice, and with great trepidation, she gradually turned around—

“—Oh, look at you. No matter how lonely you get, you shouldn’t ever take the innocent Alice out here, you know. I gave you the scheduling duty to save time for my explosion magic, and you do this on the first day!?”

“...Forgive me!”

On our way to the base.

Yunyun covered her fully blushed face with both her hands.

“I know you really thirst for some shopping with other girls, but your original duty was to bring Alice back. Next time, if you wanted to shop, I’ll take you along; so, stop doing stupid things like this!”

Hearing my offer, Yunyun's eyes shined with a mixture of hope and surprise, "R-really? Megumin wants to shop with me? My list of 'places to shop after I have friends' has reached 3 notebooks in length!"

"Isn't that a bit too ridiculous!? We can go to several store at most! By the way, I wanted to ask you something."

I then asked them the same question from before.

"What I wish to do the most? Er, Megumin... why are you asking that now? I can answer, but it'd take more than a day..."

"As I said, way too long! Surely you have something that you wish for the most, utmost, right?"

For unknown reasons, she started casting furtive glances at me.

"What I want the most is to have a duel with Megumin."

Some tiny, weak voice said.

"Didn't we settle that long ago? Both in terms of level and being a mature woman."

"You, hold on a second! Sure your level might be high and you have killed numerous demon king generals, I cannot however agree in terms of maturity!"

Yunyun's eyes glowed red. She crossed her arms around her chest, as if flaunting her bust size.

This bastard.

"I wasn't even talking about physical development. Having such an erotic body at such a young age, yet still unable to find a boyfriend? Why are we even competing?"

"Just because you're closer to Kazuma-kun doesn't give you the right to be smug! Had I wanted... wanted to... do that, I...!"

Yunyun's voice shrivelled. I, in response, puffed out my chest.

"You see, you can't even find a boyfriend, can you? Ah, who was that blonde delinquent from a few days ago? Doesn't he suit you perfectly well? Wish you two a happy married life!"

“I won’t tolerate that even as a joke! Being with him is especially forbidden! Alright, I’ll teach you a lesson on which things should never be said! Let’s duel to the death!”

Yunyun’s eyes shined crimson; she stood tall and readied her staff.

“Wh-what, wanna fight? Come at me! I got seriously restless back when you told Kazuma that you wanted to bear his child! Now, let me also teach you a grave lesson—I’ll teach you to not meddle in others’ boyfriend business!”

“D-don’t mention that! That was a total accident and misunderstanding, please forget about it!”

Tossing her staff aside, Yunyun cried indignantly. I made a mental note—“I win again!”.

“Just how many girls have relationships with Kazuma? Stealing Chris’ panties in public, doing unspeakable things with Lalatina, then having Yunyun’s child!”

“Please don’t! This was a misunderstanding, I really don’t have any feelings for Kazuma-kun! I-instead, why not let Alice describe her dreams? Megumin must be interested, right?”

Yunyun tried extremely hard to change the topic. Alice on the other hand started to blush—

“A-as for me... I...”

...What is happening with these people...

“W-with onii-sama, I... I...”

“That’s enough! What has gotten into you all!? Why is everyone so infatuated? Has this become the norm for young girls nowadays!?”

Part 5

Bringing the two lusty underlings back, I saw strange scenes at the base.

“You have some pretty good eyes for an Eris cultist. Indeed, Aqua-sama is very admirable and cute.”

“Er... eh, at least she’s isn’t a bad person. Sure.”

Curled up into a ball on the carpet, Chris listened to Cecily’s preaching.

It seems they’re talking about goddess Aqua’s strengths.

“Welcome back, Megumin. I’m convincing Chris-san to join the Axis cult!”

“Eh!? Hold on a second, since when did I mention converting!?”

Chris refuted violently, having no plans to change faiths even after all the preaching.

“What are you talking about? Let me ask you, how do you feel about devils and the undead?”

“No mercy.”

Chris’ instant response brought smiles onto Cecily’s face.

“Excellent answer Chris-san, you have indeed become a high quality candidate for the Axis cult! That’s right, Lady Aqua once said, devils must be purged, the demon king must be tortured and the undead must dive right back into the dirt, where they came from! Come, become a part of the Axis cult-“

“Eris cult also condemns the undead and devils! And I never expected you to lure me into joining the Axis cult... Why am I always finding myself in unusual situations lately...”

And here I thought the Eris and Axis cults were like oil and water... Those two are getting along just fine.

Deciding to discuss the plans, I gathered the two quarrelling devouts.

I pressed my arms on the table and leaned forward.

“Anyways...For one, I thank you all for your attendance. Our thieving group

has obtained a base, solid backing, and a stable source of funding. We have no worries about numbers. The situation is looking exceptionally well.”

“Agreed, both the member count and attendance rates have gone up, I guess we’re on the right track.”

Yunyun nodded in agreement.

“That’s right, everything is going as planned. At our current size, I’ve decided to embark on our first mission.”

Iris is slightly confused,

“‘Mission’? What are we doing today? Last time we picked herbs from the mountain, then fished by the river. I don’t have lunch packed today, so could we delay the mission till tomorrow...”

(TL note: more specifically a bento)

“Who said we were going on field trips!? True, our recent activities have been questionable, but please don’t lose sight of our original goal. Please recall, what were we here to accomplish!?”

They each said their answers.

“To make friends...”

“To adventure...”

“Onee-san wanted to form a harem of cute lolis, so I was attracted here by all these little girls...”

“Wha-!? That’s not what you said back then at all!”

Looking at these lost souls, I banged the table repeatedly.

“This isn’t right! I see we’ve lost sight of our goal. We were originally modelling the Silver Haired Thieving Group, to form our own! We’re thieves! We’re here to rob the nobles and distribute their riches! Now, please allow Chris to share her findings!”

“Long story short—they’re innocent, they don’t seem to have done any suspicious activities, so let’s change our target. Plus, why did we choose them in the first place?”

Cecily answered light-headedly,

“Because when I went there to preach, they said ‘we don’t want anything to do with religion’, and something like ‘Eris and Axis cultists, please leave us alone’...”

But Chris suddenly got excited.

“That household it is! We must bring divine retribution upon those who badmouth my religion!”

“That’s right! Chris-san is a lady of justice! You’re indeed a great Axis candidate! Megumin, we should definitely target this family, shouldn’t we?”

I said to the two topic derailers,

“Completely disagreed. We don’t attack those without bad history. Let’s change our target, neither Eris-sama nor Aqua-sama will tolerate this.”

“I agree on the attack! I...Eris-deus will definitely vult!”

“Aqua-sama will also agree for sure! I can feel Aqua-sama whispering in my ear, ‘go do it now’!”

What can I even do with them.

Yet, I’m surprised at how oddly proactive Chris is being.

Now I truly feel the importance of “understanding”, as coined by Kazuma.

“So that how it is then, I get it. I guess we’re finally becoming sisters of justice! Actually, the royals have a blacklist for corrupt nobles, so let’s strike those first. And if we end up raiding an innocent household, just let my dad apologize...”

“Don’t be so careless! Don’t you ever bring your daddy into this!”

Just as I scolded the even more excited Iris, Yunyun tugged my robe.

“Why not let us be a simple hangout squad? Look, Alice’s servant’s snacks are delicious; have a taste, Megumin...Ahhhh!”

I ate all of the food Yunyun passed over in one big gulp.

“Guess it can’t be helped. Because we don’t have a target, we’ll stay put for

now.”

After all, I’m much wiser than back when I was fighting solo.

This time, I carry the responsibilities of a leader.

“I never let you eat my half tooooo-!”

I worried silently as Yunyun shook me back and forth.

Part 6

“—I’m back!”

“Welcome home, you look exhausted.”

After that, the topic had zero development and time passed by swiftly.

Because Chris was so confident that she could find a suitable target, we dismissed early.

“Sigh, I didn’t think understanding others would be so difficult. Got harassed by a certain priest, found a certain level-headed thief to be a secret activist, argued with a certain self-proclaimed rival, got heartbroken by a certain little girl’s affection for a certain asshole adventurer...I’m tired to death.”

Usually being the troublemaker, managing other troublemakers was unexpectedly difficult.

“Sounds harsh, even though I have no clue what you’ve been doing. You must’ve felt how exhausting my role is through this experience.”

I limply laid on the sofa beside Kazuma, staring blankly up at his face.

“Oi, what’s the matter? Why are you staring so straightly at the face loved by many female adventurers from the guild? Did you only now realize how attractive I am, just like them?”

Why does Iris love guys of his kind so much? —Like I have the right to question.

He must be trying to put on a smug expression, but this raised eyebrow and these skyward pointed nostrils are really...

“You’re indeed loved by the guild girls. You’re their money pig, because all it takes for you to pay the bill is some seduction...”

“Remember those bastards for me, next time I’ll use ‘steal’ on them!”

Gritting his teeth, Kazuma spat out some usual female harassment claim.

Why do I even like this guy.

I thought back to the speech I gave at noon.

I called Iris and Yunyun infatuated; but nonetheless, aren't I, who accuses competitors all the time for Kazuma, also infatuated therefore?

Usually a lackluster lazy-bone, easy on the mouth but clearly devious, shamelessly bragging about his achievements at the Adventurer's Guild.

He appears pretty normal. Humanity wise, he's neither a good Samaritan nor a despicable villain.

"...Hey, what now? I'll feel shy if you keep staring like that. What are you implying? Do you like me?"

Shyness? Uncharacteristic of a huge pervert.

In reality, any tiny little act of intimacy is enough to...

"Of course. I was just wondering why I do."

"Eh!?"

...result in this.



“Y-you...! How many times have I told you, don’t use those words so lightly, I’m very prepared. If you want to speak of this subject, schedule it and write down the time in a letter, accurate to the hour, minute...second!”

“Your awkward demands made no sense. I just wanted to say whatever I felt needed to be said. Didn’t Kazuma talk about understanding yesterday? Now I’m wondering how should I go about understanding Kazuma.”

Continuing to stare straight at him, Kazuma seems to panic, making all sorts of wild gestures.

I giggled—

“It’s because his understanding of me that allows Kazuma to lead battles so well, right? Then, do you know what I’m thinking of right now? It’s only us in here, do you know what I want to do next?”

“...Making lo-“

Hey.

“... Wait a second, that didn’t count!”

“Why don’t you clearly repeat what you were going to say to a young girl under such an atmosphere!?”

Seeing the red in my eyes, the current Kazuma, who is desperately trying to take back his words, made my earlier philosophies seem totally senseless.

That’s right, making exact plans before striking is not my style.

Leading, managing the team then worrying about the fallout— isn’t like me at all.

I’m always at my best.

What was I thinking.

“No, your questions were too unexpected. Say, if you gave me a three-way multiple choice, I’ll definitely choose the right option! Please give me another chance!”

I’ll come back to him after I encounter a situation that I can’t deal with myself; I feel too guilty to keep nagging for an answer.

I said to the still dumbstruck Kazuma,

“You can stop now, I didn’t mind that.”

I gave him a gentle smile, to show that I'm not mad anymore.

...But then,

"Wait wait, I know I messed up, please forgive me! Let me have another chance to consider carefully! ...To be honest, starting on the hardest difficulty skips too much content, we should have started with kissing...!"

"I told you, I didn't mind! Plus, you're being too loud! Aqua and Darkness are right beside us in the kitchen, what would they think if they hear—!"

It was too late.

Kazuma wasn't looking at me, something ominous has happened.

"AHH-WAAAHHHHH...!"

Before Kazuma was Aqua, clutching a rag, half hidden around the corner of the hallway. From the looks, she had come to clean the tables.

Still staring, Aqua fearfully stumbled backward.

"Hey, Darkness! Terrifying things are happening! Kazuma and Megumin were cuddled together, faces beet-red, and were talking about kissing or something!"

I urgently chased after to halt Aqua's announcement.

Part 7

The next day.

At the secret base, I flared out my cloak as I stood in front of everyone.

“I’m feeling able today! The weather’s nice, the perfect time to raid has come!”

I struck a sick pose with my beloved staff.

“Oi, I just wanna clarify; we are only sneaking in to steal some treasures, right? What do you mean by ‘raid’? Why does it sound so scary...?”

Yunyun asked worriedly.

“Raiding is raiding. Kazuma taught me that. We have to use professional language when strategizing. Anyways, we’ll first scout out the mansion, then successfully breach the defenses, and finally finish the battle with ease.”

“Hey, aren’t we a thieving group? Are you sure we’re thieves and not terrorists?”

I ignored Yunyun who’s been shaking me this whole time, and instead questioned Chris,

“So, have you decided on the noble whom we shall raid?”

“Er, aye, I guess so. I’m not as worried as Yunyun, but I still have to confirm; we are stealing, right? Not like, barging inside and causing a disaster?”

Even though Chris seemed doubtful, she still pulled out a map and showed it to everyone.

It’s a map of Axel suburbs.

Chris pointed at a forest next to the city.

“Er, there’s actually a noble’s mansion here. Some suspicious things have been happening around there.”

According to Chris, many powerful monsters not seen anywhere else in Axel have been showing up there.

“Isn’t this business for the Adventurer’s Guild? I’ve heard that the adventurers have gotten lazy after some successful boss fights had paid them well. Because of this, could the strong monsters have come out to feed on the weaker ones?”

Chris nodded with a complicated expression.

“Maybe, maybe not. But there is one possibility, and that is this family having used a divine weapon...”

A divine weapon, one that summoned and controlled monsters at will.

Very worthy of its title, but...

“If this thing is so powerful, how could a nameless noble get their hands on it? It would have been ridiculously expensive...”

“In actuality, to prevent problems like this, the weapon was originally sealed in a lake, guarded by a fearsome huge beast.”

Fearsome huge beast...

...I remember some recent events involving a fearsome beast in a certain lake in Axel.

“Indeed, that is a Kowloon Hydra. That area had had its magic drained by the hydra, polluting the water. So to prevent anyone from obtaining it, the divine weapon was sealed there. However... the habitat around the lake recovered at a staggering rate, attracting many residents. So, the person who originally sealed it away came to transfer it, but found that...”

“—the divine weapon was gone. So that’s how.”

And then came the reports for strong monsters.

Now thinking closely, the motive for living by a remote lake rather than within the city walls is pretty suspicious.

After all, the weapon summoned random monsters, so undesirable ones may have been stashed in the forest.

“Also, this divine weapon... seems to have been passed around different nobles. Its original owner was a noble called Alderp.”

The guy who had unspeakable desires about Darkness; the one who disappeared into thin air.

“As a royal, I cannot let such a dangerous weapon be out and about. Big boss, let’s go find the owner!”

“Hey Alice, did you mention ‘royal’?”

“Nope.”

Stared at by Yunyun, Alice backed off innocently.

Suddenly, the so far quietly tea-sipping Cecily chimed in from the sofa,

“Will do...that divine weapon has huge potential. Use it to summon a lot of monsters, then just as they’re making all sorts of noises, the Axis cultists would enter spectacularly and save the day—this way, our numbers could grow exponentially!”

Alright then, it can indeed be used for nefarious purposes.

That only makes its retrieval all the more important.

Speaking of which, isn’t the situation already dire?

Not sure if the task is too grand or takes too much skill, but I have bad feelings about it.

Then again...

“I remember collecting dangerous divine weapons was a primary goal for the Silver Haired Thieving Group, so let’s start here!”

—it’s a pretty and clean little house, looks to be pretty new.

The house was surrounded by sturdy metal fences, filled with traps. Probably anti-monster.

Eh, not bad.

No problems with the house...

“Things are sure escalating!”

“Hey, don’t say that now! Go save them!”

The nobles we were planning to strike were being attacked by a large mob of

monsters.

“Ah, unless the weapon summoned uncontrollable monsters? But even then, there shouldn’t be a whole horde of rogue monsters...right?”

As Chris on the side observed carefully, Alice unsheathed her sword.

“No matter the cause, we still have to save them. Those guards can’t handle it by themselves...”

She requested guidance from me.

A few guards were attacking from within the fences using spears and bows.

But...

“Don’t, onee-san has an idea. Let’s leave them for now.”

Cecily suddenly said something like that.

“You’re not wrong, as thieves, calmly observing the situation should be the right course of action. If they really have the divine weapon, they would deploy it to command the monsters.”

Even Chris agreed.

“I unbelievably came to an agreement with an Eris cultist! That’s right, we have to wait till the last moment, till they’re truly in grave danger, then be their heroes and rescue them! Then, the monster count would have decreased, too, making our job easier.”

“Wrong! That’s not what I meant! I was saying, thinking as a team of thieves, we probably should make sure if they even have the weapon first...!”

Cecily nodded toward the desperately explaining Chris.

“Then, we can ask for the divine weapon as a reward for our acts. As expected of Eris cultists, your strategies are truly evil! Not that I mind!”

“Th-th-that’s not right at all! I didn’t even say we should sweep in only at the last second!”

I understand Chris’ thinking.

Indeed, if they really had the divine weapon, they would surely deploy it in

the face of serious danger.

There's no need to risk searching inside the mansion to confirm its existence.

"I didn't expect Chris to be so cold-blooded, but that idea isn't half bad."

"Even you, Megumin!? You guys misunderstood, let me explain!!"

But—

"So that's why I said, definitely not in a place like this!"

"What can that achieve now!? Our Lady was always this arrogant!"

Hearing the banter from the guards inside, Yunyun and Iris looked at me worriedly.

"Where's the Lady!? We have to make sure she gets away..."

"Never saw her before this, so we can't really abandon our post here!"

Then, we heard a conversation like this.

"With so many monsters, defeating them might be too hard even with our help..."

"Megumin..."

Yunyun muttered.

I didn't respond, but instead kept my attention on the nobles under attack. Then I responded calmly,

"Well then, as the leader for the thieving group, I have responsibility to not let anyone get hurt. If you're a smart Crimson Demon like me, you should understand that 'leaving them be' is the most logical choice."

Yunyun clearly understood, so she depressedly went quiet.

Alice, on the other side, her stance with her sword drawn still held, looked back and forth between me and the nobles.

I faced by back to them, and took a step forward.

"However, while I'm the leader for this thieving group, I'm even more of an adventurer. I, who shall one day defeat the Demon King, will never let people be killed by monsters in front of my eyes!"

Saying this, I held my staff high. Giggles were heard from behind me.

“Really. Megumin is indeed better as an adventurer than a thief!”

Hearing this neither praising nor offending statement from Chris, I started chanting my spell.

Even though I wanted to be like my two thief idols, I can’t really help it.

I cannot hide and cower in front of monsters.

“Megumin, I’ll take care of any survivors.”

To my right, Yunyun raised her own staff.

She dare question the deadliness of my explosion magic...how brave.

“The monsters will definitely find us after the explosion. I’ll take out those coming in my direction! I’ll be Big Boss’ shield today!”

Even though I feel she should be the subject of protection, she adamantly held her sword up to my 7 o’clock.

“Onee-san will do the cheering from back here! Don’t hesitate to come for healing if you get hurt, lying is for the naughty!”

The unchanged Cecily made everyone smile a little.



Chris behind me unsheathed her dagger.

“Then, I’ll play real this time, too. Let me show you all how strong thieves can be. Megumin, proceed!”

Looks like starting a real thieving group would have to wait much longer.

Maybe even after the fall of the Demon King, after peace prevails.

“I’ll leave the first strike to you, take this chance to show us how powerful Big Boss is!”

I happily agreed to Yunyun’s challenge.

“E X P L O S I O N —!”

I unleashed my fully charged attack-!

Part 8

After my mana was restored, I walked my lead-filled legs back to home.

“Welcome back! Megumin, listen, we’re having frost crabs again tonight! Really nostalgic of the days when we first moved here!”

Aqua, full of smiles, greeted me while cutting up the crabs.

“Very luxurious, I thought I only had one chance to taste frost crabs in my life.”

I dragged by mana depleted, tired and unstable body over to the sofa.

“You sure are way more tired than usual. I heard the explosion all the way from here, the atmosphere it created was very different, too. I’d probably give it a 95.”

Kazuma said, waiting at the table.

“By the way, Megumin, you look a lot more joyful than usual. Did something great happen?”

Darkness asked gently while placing the steaming pots onto the table.

“Today I figured out what I truly wish to do. Maybe that’s why.”

“You have other wishes besides using explosion magic?”

My rarely joyful feelings were shredded by this Kazuma guy.

It’s about time for him to treat me more than a crazy explosion maniac girl.

Today, I merely brought the squad to a noble’s home then saved their butts

with explosion magic—

“...Eh? Did you think I only unleashed the explosion and did nothing afterwards this time?”

“What are you saying? No, why are you saying this now? Haven’t you always only been good for explosion magic? Without the explosion magic aspect, you’d be only a regular loli, isn’t that right?”

Kazuma poured his wine while answering me in a particularly disrespectful manner. This guy, just had to use the term “loli”.

“Then isn’t the guy who’s constantly sexually harassing me a loli...con? Let me go broadcast this news at the Adventurer’s Guild.”

“D-don’t drag us both down, alright? You’d be officially be labelled as a loli, too, you know!”

Aqua selfishly started cooking the crabs.

“Really now, what are you all thinking, don’t argue in front the crabs! Can’t you just be like me and live carefreely?”

“You were just bouncing around excitedly when you took the crabs from Darkness’ father, before crying from hitting your foot on the sofa.”

I was going to wash my hands when Darkness came over and said,

“You seem especially happy today, why not share with us what you did during dinner? Actually, for the past few days, you’ve seemed very happy in general!”

She smiled joyfully.

—Let’s go over the resolution. That noble we saved? Total asshole.

After we’ve dealt with the monsters, a girl about our age showed up. She seemed to have escaped by herself.

Before we could ask for payment, she told us something as rude as “I never wanted you guys to help”.

Had I some mana left, I would have slapped that bitch with all my might.

Why was that household surrounded by monsters.

Why did they settle in such a place.

Though we had many questions, Darkness promised them to be answered soon.

From what I've heard, the Masked Thieving Group have also targeted that noble.

I am curious as to how Chris would know this, but the thieves probably have their own underground network.

"Darkness made a good point, I'm actually intrigued by what Megumin had been doing recently, too. Is it anything strange?"

Kazuma asked while staring intently at the crackling crabs in the pot.

"I know. I heard it all from Cecily. She also mentioned inventing a money making tactic using the cuteness of little girls!"

Kazuma and Darkness stared at me accusingly, as if I had been involved in some shady business.

"Fine, I'll report in detail what I did. It's nothing unspeakable after all...really! So it'd be nice if you stopped looking at me that way!"

I explained while reminiscing my thieving group experiences.

Though things could have gone better, as long as my two idols are picking up our pieces, I'm happy enough.

I wish—

"'Twas the night of the fireworks show. On my way home after being released from police custody—"

I wish that one day, I'll get to see them again—

Chapter 5: The Counter-Striking Thieving Group

(Kazuma PoV, “Big Boss” mostly refers to Chris. Kazuma refers to the SHTG as “masked thieving group” (as he wears a mask) while Eris refers to it as the SHTG (as she has white hair).

Part 1

That was after our visit to Elroad, where a whole plethora of events had taken place.

“Is that the Tennessee mansion? Quite grandiose for a home in such a wild location.

We arrived at the Tennessee mansion, situated in a forest near Axel.

I admired the great mansion and exhaled in respect. Beside me, Darkness nodded; due to her noble status, she was also dressed in formal clothes.

“The Tennessee family had always been specialized in trading. They’re of low status among nobility, but wealth-wise they’re even richer than my family. Although, their Lady is very much disliked. Clearly only a lowly upstart, they still ridicule and mock my family for poverty! Kazuma, this quest seems highly suspicious. You have to be careful!”

Beside Darkness, who is out of her mind from royal private matters, the also formally-clad Aqua screamed for no apparent reason.

“I too knew it was Tennessee! When I tried to loan money after spending it all, I was expelled because ‘they never lend money to Axis cultists’!”

“Oh you, doing this kind of nonsense while I wasn’t paying attention... Darkness, too, who tried to drug me in Elroad. Can’t you all be more like Megumin who’s been very obedient lately?”

“!?”

Hearing this, Megumin trembled.

“...Hey, what did you do this time?”

“Nothing.”

She broke eye contact and violently refuted. I instantly read that as “she definitely did something again”. Meanwhile—

“K-Kazuma... I’m sorry about trying to drug you, so... please let’s forget about that... Uhm, this matter is embarrassing to both of us and should definitely be

kept secret, alright? Oh, and I can treat you to high quality wine after we get back.”

“Hey, Kazuma, this family just won’t do, let’s reject this quest! Ones who dislike the Axis cult can’t possibly be of any good.”

—Ignoring the two complainers, I knocked on the mansion door.

—A while ago I received a letter.

To say, someone had invited the strongest adventurer in Axel—me—to a mission.

After all, I’ve made yet another legend in Elroad, so being relied on is only expected.

But I also have to constantly train and grind to prepare for the inevitable battle with the Demon King. Therefore, I’m very busy.

I would have normally rejected such a quest, but the client was a noble.

Even though I have already made all kinds of dark, underground connections, a taste of “royalty” had taught me that one more connection wouldn’t hurt.

And thus, I accepted this quest.

“Greetings, first time seeing you. I am Lady Carleen of the Tennessee family, please take care.”

We were received in the lounge by a girl slightly older than me, having a body slim as a model and a head of red hair.

“You must be Satou Kazuma. Thank you for taking our quest.”

The Carleen girl froze after looking behind me.

No, more specifically after seeing the Megumin hiding behind my back.

“...Excuse me, just a second please.”

“Ah, sure... no problem...”

I led Megumin—still holding on—to the hallway by her neck.

“Spill it, what’s your story with Carleen?”

“What are you talking about? This is also my first time meeting her... I-I get it!

I'll tell you! I'll tell you! Please stop using Drain Touch! I won't be able to cast my daily explosion!"

Megumin, who had been acting strange ever since coming inside, said as she avoided my right hand,

"...Actually, when this household was attacked by monsters, I saved them along with my friends—"

Even though I have no clue why Megumin came to this forest; so far, her story seemed like nothing that's worth covering up.

"Only that? I thought you damaged the building with your explosion magic or... got caught by the police or something..."

"No, nothing of that sort happened..."

Yet Megumin was mumbling.

"Since you did nothing unspeakable, you should be confident. You could, what, feel guilty about not informing us before taking on monsters at worst. I was indeed worried for you, but from what you said, your group is set powerwise!"

"Yes, we have an underling that's marginally powerful, a friendless crimson demon, plus an Axis priest and a certain thief."

While I don't understand the composition of this team, I'm pretty certain that the crimson demon is Yunyun. With her on the team, I have little to worry about.

"Then it's A-OK. After all, grinding experience is also important; I'll come play with you guys when I have time."

Hearing that made her happy.

When I took Megumin back through the doors to the lounge...

"Apologize, now! For not lending me money because I was an Axis cultist!"

"S-sorry, very sorry. I apologize in the name of our treasurer."

Seeing Aqua who's forcing Carleen to apologize and the completely red Darkness who's covering her face, all I wanted to do was leave at this point.

Part 2

“—Repelling monsters around the... mansion?”

“Indeed. We feel secure with the only best adventurers in Axel on this duty.”

After calming Aqua down with some sweets, she reaffirmed the contents of this quest.

“We aren’t all that powerful. Although, I heard that the rewards were unusually large. Should I understand that you have high hopes for us?”

“Oi, can’t you be a little more humble? As I’ve been saying since the beginning, this quest seems very fishy, so again: be careful.”

I listened to the briefing attentively. Meanwhile, Darkness complained under her breath and elbowed me in the stomach.

That said, considering our accomplishments thus far, the only mistake would be treating us badly. This current attitude should be what’s expected.

Carleen suddenly held my hand as I pridefully straightened my back.

“Of course Kazuma-sama, I’ve heard about your fame and legends. Having a plethora of skills and adapting with them to any situation, you made mockery out of many demon king generals. Besides, your teammates include a holy priest, a powerful archwizard and... they’re all high-tiered specializations!”

“That’s an exaggeration. Although, without us, the city probably would have fallen into chaos by now.”

Holding my hand while looking at me with seductive eyes, Carleen’s words made me ever so slightly flustered. Yet I sat even taller.

Then the speechless Darkness beside me—

“...Hey, aren’t I also a part of your team?”

—spoke while staring daggers.

“Oh look at me believing you only showed up today out of fear that your precious Kazuma-sama might be won over by me... But the rumours of Lady

Cuckiness Ford Lalatina fooling around as an adventurer were real! Being an impoverished noble of such a high status must be tough...”

Carleen let go of my hand and sarcastically mocked Darkness.

“Hoho, funny now that you say it. As expected of an upstart—no manners whatsoever. Unlike those bottom-rung, irresponsible nobles who seem willing to sell their bodies for money, our family hold royal duties and responsibility to the kingdom. I am a crusader who is a shield that guards the people.”

In stark contrast to when she elbowed me earlier on, Darkness stood tall and proud, smiling with grace and heroism.

...Oi, what the hell, that’s scary.

“Oolala, expected nothing less from your Highness, Dustiness. All because of the so-called royal duties, you’re poor to the point of wearing the exact same dress in every ceremony. Touching, to say the least. If you wouldn’t mind, you could pick a few from my old selection of dresses and take them for free; how does that sound?”

Seeing Carleen finish her statement with a cold giggle, Darkness fought back without remorse—

“For a family that treats dresses as consumables, your generosity is almost as vast as your chest. Although, that isn’t due to my ‘poverty’, but my love for my mother’s dress; sorry for the confusion. Besides...”

“Had I worn your clothes, I’m afraid—”

As she spoke, she crossed her arms under her bulging, voluptuous breasts.

“—they simply wouldn’t fit!”

The atmosphere thickened.

...What the hell, that’s so scary!

I want to go home.

Carleen suddenly pounded the table.

“Say that once again, why don’t you, the Dustiness whose only redeeming quality is her body! The boys obviously prefer slimmer girls like me!”

“Haha, then why do all the men gaze at me at every social event? Was that an illusion? Having to change dresses every time my bust increased in size is inconvenient, you know. Unless the Lady of the Tennessee family changes so often for the same issue?”

Darkness, too, stood up and lifted her crossed arms to show off her assets.

“Ahh...so heavy! If not for my being an adventurer and training my muscles, I would’ve collapsed long ago.”

“This... this woman!”



Carleen glared at Darkness gritting her teeth, yet ominously, Darkness only pretended to be troubled.

“This must be jealousy-inducing from the perspective of Lady Tennessee;

when in actuality, being so big is more trouble than it's worth, you know? Heavy, stressful, restricted by your clothing... Even my armour had to be custom made. The boys' gazes just go like..... Hey, hey you, I had expected you to be staring right

here, but...come on, isn't that a little too direct?"

Finding me staring dumbly at her, Darkness fearfully stumbled backwards.

"O-O-Ouch! Oi, what are you doing Megumin!? It wasn't aimed at you...! I'm sorry! Please stop pulling my hair!"

Watching Darkness having her hair pulled for no reason, Carleen said with a sigh,

"Er... So um... about the quest, will you accept it?"

She awkwardly gave a warm smile as she asked me.

Part 3

The next day.

Having accepted the quest, we arrived again at the mansion after fully gearing up.

To repel strong monsters around the mansion.

“Speaking of which, why are powerful monsters only appearing here? Could there be some kind of bait in action? Also, I have an ominous feeling about this, so let’s head back for now and come back later.”

We’re currently searching for strong monsters near the mansion.

“Earlier when we made you buy dinner on a rainy day, you also had an ominous feeling. You ended up playing video games didn’t you. Say, do monster really migrate that often? Even for a quest, this still feels especially vague. They only talked about monsters around the mansion... Well, if there are any undead, we just so happen to have a god-tier bait.”

“Hey, just to confirm, this bait you speak of isn’t me right?”

Aqua asked while tugging my shirt. The answer was obvious.

...Although.

“I didn’t expect you to say something like that. Where did your royal noble lady manners go? What do you mean by ‘all the men gaze at me, could that be an illusion’? Gah, it seems you do enjoy being stared at like this at every event, don’t you?”

“N-no! It’s not like...that! In that context, us nobles use eye contact to communicate, it’s a social phenomenon!”

Darkness panicked. Meanwhile—

“Right, that was also my first time seeing Darkness so blatantly show off her assets. Is that how you really are, having so many faces we’ve never seen before. What were you saying? ‘Ahh, so heavy... if not for my being an adventurer, I would have collapsed’? You’re pretty darn creative if I do say so.”

Megumin's follow-up attack made Darkness blushinglly quicken her pace.

She unsheathed her greatsword and started slashing wildly at the woods as if trying to cut away her awkward feelings.

It was then...

"Eh? Hey, wait a minute."

My Detect Enemy was triggered just as I tugged Darkness' cape.

"What now, Kazuma? If you embarrass me any further I'll..."

Darkness' sword shot into the sky with a loud "clank".

Had she walked any further, she would have been the sword.

Realizing the danger, Darkness threw aside her broken weapon and raised her arms in a protective stance.

Yet, something we can't see at all was hiding deep in the forest.

Usually, this situation meant that...

"Enemies incoming from above! Take cover!"

I quickly turned skyward, knocking Darkness away in the process...

—Here I am in the very familiar, bright room.

Before me was a slightly confused Eris, seeming as if she wanted to say something.

"...That was..."

"...Sorry, please don't say anything. Let me cool down a bit."

I buried my face in between my knees in a fetal position right there and then.

Just thinking of my stern statement of caution makes me embarrassed to death.

...To death, literally.

"—Usually means they're all above..."

Indeed, but nothing was above us.

Nor in front, much less the sides.

Behind? Well...

“What the hell, from below!? I’m just about done with this world!”

After pushing aside Darkness, an antlion-like monster came out of the ground and—

“...Eris-sama, are you trying to hold back your laughter? Could you please not...?”

“Not at all! I’m not holding back laughter, don’t worry! No, saying ‘don’t worry’ is inappropriate. After all, you did lose your life. Sorry for my insensitivity!”

Dying from the opposite direction right after warning the others. Can anything be more embarrassing.

Eris still held her poker face, yet her shoulders were trembling. It takes real skill to hold back laughter to such an extent.

“Rather than that... Right, why would something of that sort appear next to Axel? My level isn’t low at all, yet I was still instakilled!”

Eris’s shoulders abruptly stopped trembling.

“About that... Kazuma-kun, do you have time tonight?”

She said with a completely straight face.

“If you mean ‘free’, then, well, I’m free basically everyday. What, looking for a night raid? Why not warm up right here?”

“Completely wrong, I was talking about retrieving the divine weapon! Flirting with a Goddess will bring forth divine retribution, you know!”

Really now, that matter?

“Then I’m all for it... Say, could all this be related to that divine weapon?”

Hearing my much quieter inquiry, Eris slightly nodded.

“We can’t be sure yet... but it’s definitely a possibility.”

—That is, the divine weapon had originally belonged to Alderp.

It could summon and command monsters at will. Retrieved by Chris, it was

sealed at the bottom of the lake, but...

“Initially, I believed that because the land had been depleted of mana, no residents would relocate there in the foreseeable future... Yet, the magic replenished at rates far exceeding my anticipation; consequently, population of said region is already underway. I had intended to transfer the divine weapon before it could be discovered; however, upon inspecting the bottom of the lake, I realized...”

“...That the weapon had already been taken.”

“Indeed...”

The usually either straight-faced or gracefully smiling Eris wore a depressed expression.

I understand now. And thus, strong monsters have been appearing there lately.

That Carleen noble lacked anything but money; her having bought the divine weapon is very likely.

Her strategy must be something along the lines of—hiding in a suburban mansion, summoning monsters slot machine-style and releasing them if their monetary value isn't sufficient.

...Although by that logic, the date at which the divine weapon went missing clashed with when the mansion had been built.

But this is a world with magic.

She may have used some sort of spell. One that's similar to those instant food and mansion spells Darkness showed us in Elroad.

Unlike a certain useless goddess, Eris rarely failed. Even then, she is still my thus far most respected, diligent Big Boss.

“Sure, in the end, we're only infiltrating and searching that Carleen's mansion for the divine weapon, right? Count me in.”

As soon as I agreed, Eris' face lit up.

After that, she playfully pressed her index finger against her lips like a naughty

child who had just thought of the perfect prank.

“Tonight, besides Kazuma-kun, there will be an additional helper. As for who... Simply wait and see for yourself!”

Part 4

“—Happy resurrection, Mr. Satou “Enemies-incoming-from-above” Kazuma who was mangled from below!”

The always fun-poking goddess appeared with a face full of sunshine right after I revived. Currently, I have a strong urge to slap some sense into her.

I seem to be laying on Aqua’s thighs.

Sitting up, I took a look around.

“Kazuma, you’re awake. That was... Well, thank you...very much for...saving me. I was supposed...to be...the one protecting you guys...apologies, sincerely.”

Darkness, breathing raggedly in a suit of crooked armour, kneeled before me.

Taking a closer look, the antlion monster’s mandible had been severed; it being deformed by an incredibly strong squeeze.

Among us, the only person capable of such a feat is...

“I’m very glad that you saved me, though I still hope you’ll get to see more of how tough I can be. Next time for sure... Wh-what is it Kazuma? What is your stare implying; what is your expression implying!?”

I looked at her with a horrified expression, which Darkness didn’t seem to understand.

“N-not like that Kazuma! Even I do not have the strength to pinch such a strong monster to death! Because of how badly you died, I let Aqua give me a strength buff, then...!”

She refuted hurriedly, perhaps in fear of being called hard again.

“How badly I died? How did I die this time? I died so fast, I didn’t feel anything...”

“Oh! You...were cut cleanly in half up the middle...”

“I don’t want to—I don’t need to know this! Wait a moment, did I really die that disgustingly!? ...Hey, I was just wondering how my clothes are intact after such a death; looks like someone dressed me.”

Then... If so, who put my clothes on for me?

I turned towards Darkness and Megumin, both of them avoiding eye contact.

Who was it!?

How could I conclude from this kind of reaction!?

Then, seeing that I was troubled, Aqua gave me a gentle chuckle.

“It’s alright Kazuma, don’t worry. For a Goddess of my stature, the nude form of a human is nothing out of the ordinary.”

“Shut your mouth! Don’t put on a smile like that in this kind of situation!”

—Even though we only defeated one monster; since we already have a casualty, we called it a day.

The quest rewards were calculated from kill count.

The reward for just one subjugation is substantial. Yet, the client thought of it as a cheap price. In response...

“O-only one!?”

In the same lounge from yesterday, Carleen widened her eyes upon hearing our report.

“Yep, only one. Sorry for letting you down, but...”

She cut Darkness off with the wave of a hand.

“One? Even with Lady Dustiness, you still only killed one?”

After mocking us, she suddenly laughed.

“Ahahahahaha! Lady Dustiness, having said so many pompous statements, only defeated one monster? Even with the party that supposedly defeated demon generals? The number one in Axel??”

Carleen’s mockery towards Darkness pissed me right off. At this moment, Darkness also shot up furiously.

“Whatever you have to say, just spill it! I know you hate me; but if you dare insult my partners, I’ll make you pay!”

“Oh I have lots to say! Because of your family putting all kinds of restrictions on loans, our income was crippled! When Lord Alderp was in charge, I was making a freaking fortune! What happened to that lord!?”

Carleen objected, also standing up.

“Since when did I let you complain about our family’s policies!? I was asking you what the hell you had against ‘only defeating one monster’! Great, since that is what you wish to talk about, let’s clear it up right here! Loans are a necessary business procedure, and I’m not disallowing that. It’s only that your interest rates are way too high , and your debt-collecting strategies are too despicable!”

“That’s what I meant when I said talking to a Lady who doesn’t have a care in the world is too difficult! Even though the interest is high, as long as people want to loan, it’s still a win-win in the end! Besides, you mentioned that I milk people to death for their debt? What’s wrong with justly taking back what you deserved from those people who beg and pray for loans then turn into devils when you ask them for returns!? This is why you were so indebted to Lord Alderp that you had to marry him... though you lost even that when your groom disappeared!”

Ah, I see how it is.

I see Carleen had said some unforgivable things.

“Bitch! You’ve got some balls to say that as a puny bottom-rung noble! Stay put while I strangle you!”

“C-come at me! You’re only words anyway! ...Dustiness? Hey, hold on, you’re dealing with a civilian here, you’ll get in big trouble if you killed me like that!”

“What’s wrong with justly executing a usuring loan shark upstart like you!? This is for the good of the people and kingdom! I wouldn’t mind sitting in jail after wiping you out... What is it, Megumin? Don’t you stop me, can’t you see I’m having a final showdown with this criminal delinquent!?”

(TL note: usury is an illegal practice of unreasonably high interest rates)

Megumin suddenly pulled on Darkness' cape. Carleen, having her collar manhandled by Darkness, was scared to tears.

"Darkness, let's stop for now. We didn't really complete the quest; plus, Kazuma hasn't recovered fully. Let's call it here today."

The most easily triggered Megumin said calmly.

Part 5

That night.

We got home early after receiving our reward from a slightly shaken Carleen.

Megumin had an announcement to make. After hearing her speak—

“—Pardon me, could you please restart from the beginning?”

“No problem... Er, out of excitement, I started my own thieving group and before I realized, we had thousands of members. We turned the best house in Axel into our base; after we got solid backing, we were going to officially begin our criminal activities, and our first target was that noble called Carleen.”

Slightly terrified of what I just heard, I pondered—

What did that bunch even do.

The equally stiff Darkness looked away and said,

“Speaking of which, the best mansion in Axel was recently sold...”

Oh I beg you, please don’t do this.

“Yes, one of my underlings abused her status just a little bit, and got us the rights to use the mansion.”

“Hold on a second, even with the power of the Dustiness household, obtaining such a mansion is still a challenge. Megumin, could your ‘underling’ be...”

Look, I’m begging you all to stop, if you keep talking I wouldn’t be able to stay out of this!

“Right Megumin, didn’t you call Princess Iris your ‘underling’ on our trip to Elroad?”

“Stop now Aqua, you’re usually dim, so why do you have to be excessively smart right at this inopportune moment? Look, we don’t know anything, not a single thing about this, understand!?”

“Understand, my ass! Hey, Megumin, what is actually going on!? In other

words, you dragged Princess Iris into some questionable organization, then attacked that family with a bunch of strangers!?”

An inwardly crying Darkness asked with a head full of cold sweat.

“Calling them strangers would be rude. We currently have the carefree little sis, the friendless crimson demon, a priest from an Axis church and a thief as official members, all the others are unconfirmed!”

Except that thief, I feel I could name all the other members.

How could this have happened as soon as I slacked off.

“Besides, strictly speaking, we have only the plans to strike, so we scouted out the target. We haven’t done anything yet. As I told Kazuma earlier, the family was under attack by monsters, so I helped them eliminate the threat.”

Megumin’s words calmed me just a little.

No, I have more questions to ask her.

“In the end, why would you create such a stupid organization? Why can’t you just live a regular life?”

My sincerity earned a “what the hell is this guy on about” look from Megumin.

“Didn’t I tell you before? It’s unforgettable. The second time we had snow crimson crabs, while everyone ate, didn’t I tell my entire story starting from how I met the Silver Haired Thieving Group? If you want an explanation for my thieving group, I guess that’s why.”

At this point, I didn’t dare admit that I hadn’t been listening at all while eating crabs.

“I told everyone about my thieving group already back then. How we were hiring adventurers in Axel, how we bought the base, and started working.”

“Huh, uh, that’s... exactly how it went, yes?”

Seeing Darkness look elsewhere, I concluded that she hadn’t been listening at all either.

I turned my sight to the opposite direction—Aqua boldly shook her head and

said,

“Sorry, I was focused on eating crabs, didn’t pay attention.”

...So Darkness and I have fallen to the same level as this person.

“—And then, after you saved that noble, they shooed you away without even thanking you, much less giving a reward?”

To conclude her episode with the noble, I asked this question.

“Indeed, that Carleen person was surprised after seeing me, mostly likely out of awkwardness. I didn’t go out of my way to help her either; initially, I was planning to attack her household, but saw that they were under attack, so I lent a hand out of heroism...”

Megumin awkwardly shrunk a little.

“And thus, Megumin came home empty-handed due to guilt?”

“Yes...”

Hearing my question, Megumin drooped her shoulders as if reminiscing the incident.

However, being stripped of glory in front of her teammates is no pleasureable experience.

...Darkness, whose eyes had been closed—suddenly stood up, eyes wide open.

“Despicable, that upstart isn’t only stingy but also cunning as well! I can tolerate her deceiving Kazuma and I, but as a noble Lady, I cannot accept such heartless actions towards little Megumin! Unforgivable!”

“Ah, hey, while I certainly resonate with your words well, what was that about me being OK to trick?”

Hearing my response, Darkness’ eyes glowed,

“Kazuma! Tomorrow—I was about to say ‘at once’—tomorrow morning I shall gather every family I can reach to launch an offensive on that household! Didn’t Megumin originally plan to rob them? Now, with the Dustiness family backing you, feel free to blow them to smithereens!”

“Why are you spitting nonsense!? Even the volatile Megumin held her temper!”

“No, I only held back my criminal desires when I saw the large group of monsters. My adventurer instinct overtook my thief instinct.”

Enough of this self-degradation as soon as you want to praise them for once!

“These matters seem complicated. To prevent further complications, I shall go have a drink and then rest.”

All aside, Aqua seems to be the most normal one tonight.

“Just you wait, Tennessee! I don’t care about the consequences anymore. After this, I’ll happily take any sort of prosecution, as long as I get to show you my wrath!”

Hearing such an oath from Darkness, I escaped to the safety of my room.

Part 6

As the sky darkened and everyone turned off their lights to sleep...

Someone quietly knocked on my door.

“I’m awake.”

I answered while turning under the sheets. A petite figure entered the room.

“Sorry for bothering you...”

It was Megumin.

That said, she wasn’t wearing her pajamas even at this hour, showing that she’d been distressed ever since dinnertime.

Indeed, her depression traces all the way back to my resurrection.

Even though she tried her best to act nonchalant, as a long-term teammate, I instantly saw through it.

“What is it? Seems like something private yet serious.”

I sat up, trying to prevent the matters from becoming even more serious.

Megumin drooped her head and shoulders.

“I’m sorry.”

She quietly apologized.

“No, suddenly coming in my room to say such a thing makes me feel dumped, don’t do such a revolting thing.”

I teased for her reply, but she kept her head down...

“Had I not tried to save that noble and allowed the monsters to attack, Kazuma may not have had to die. On top of that, the source of those powerful monsters around the mansion is probably that Carleen woman...”

...then said something like that out of nowhere.

Eh?

I felt as if I had heard something similar from another person.

She continued.

“The monster-summoning divine weapon might be in that noble’s home. If I managed to steal it, Kazuma wouldn’t have di—”

“Who told you all this?”

Having someone in mind, I cut her off.

Maybe not having expected me to question her sources, her eyes glowed red in the dark and looked around—

“It was the ‘proper thief’ in our group I was talking about; Kazuma does know her though...”

With that, she smiled ever so slightly.

I sighed, rolled out of my bed to stare at the window.

She’s probably purposefully emitting a hostile aura so I would save her from the cold outside.

My Detect Enemy had been telling me that someone was waiting outside my window this whole time.

Leaving Megumin baffled, I abruptly got off the bed and walked to the window.

I flung open the curtains—

“Is this the thief you were looking for?”

As if this was all expected, she waved at us from the outside—

Right now, she isn't the goddess Eris, nor Megumin's underling, but the high-bounty masked thief—my one and only Big Boss.

Part 7

“Hey, aren't you a little too slow to notice me, Assistant-kun? I'm just about frozen here.”

Opening the window, Chris eloquently slid inside.

“Say, Big Boss never set a time did she. Really, wouldn't it have been better if we met outside?”

I replied in an especially fluent manner.

Megumin looked at us with stupor without moving an inch.

“...Oi, Assistant-kun, Megumin seems to have petrified.”

“Isn't that a result of your fabulous entrance? Speaking of which, with a suspicious person entering through their window, anyone would freak out.”

Saying irrelevant things, we smiled naughtily. Deep down, we clearly knew the reason why she's so shocked.

“...So-”

“Huh?”

“What was that, Megumin? Sorry, I couldn't hear you clearly.”

Muttering something, Megumin suddenly kneeled down.

“I'm so sorry! I'm obviously your biggest fan, yet I didn't even know your true identity!”

“Ah, hey, you're too loud, people can hear us!”

“It's OK, Megumin! This is nothing worth apologizing for, so please get up would you?”

As we panicked, Megumin suddenly raised her head to glare at us.

“Say, uhm... you had been calling Kazuma ‘Assistant-kun’ this whole time, could it be...”

Her eyes shined red with enthusiasm. Now would be a terrible time to play dumb.

I shot a reaffirming glance at Chris. She winked in response and gave me the thumbs-up, permitting me to spill the truth.

After all she deliberately chose a time when Megumin would be present. She clearly wanted to do the grand reveal tonight.

Then I have no reason to keep it secret.

I walked over to the closet where I kept my mask—

“Look closely Megumin. The idol you were passionately describing really is—”

I opened the closet.

Chris beside me smiled naughtily and decided to use this moment to mock Megumin—

“

Yes, I will look closely, because I want to see what the person I like the most had been doing this whole time.

“

Megumin then proceeded to straightforwardly defend her position; it’s now Chris’ turn to blush.

“Big Boss, this little girl is a tryhard, better not poke fun at her. I’ve suffered quite enough.”

“S-s-sorry, sorry. I don’t quite understand the situation, yet I’ve been massively hurt. What is this foul-smelling romance. What is this mixed feeling of shyness, curiosity and an overwhelming urge to cover my face...!”

Megumin looked at us somewhat sadly as we whispered,

“About that, are you two in a close relationship? Since when did you two get

so intimate?”

“Megumin, you’re mistaken! We’ve only recently started thieving; didn’t I say this before? I have absolutely no feelings for Assistant-kun! I only see him as a friend, nope, no special feelings at all!”

“Wait a moment, what did you two talk about while I was gone? How come I got friendzoned just like that?”

What were these two even talking about.

To prevent the gossip from going out of control, I’ve vowed to take my sexual harassment down a notch.

As I pondered and changed, I felt two pairs of eyes from behind.

“When you said you wanted look closely, isn’t this a little too close...?”

The two intently staring girls hurriedly turned away just as I was about to remove my pants.

“—Isn’t the full moon simply gorgeous tonight! It doesn’t matter for Assistant-kun since he has night vision; but for me, it’s the best environment to work under!

We ran through Axel under the full moon.

Megumin was dressed in her casual outfit instead of her usual robe.

According Chris, she even made a new facial bandana just for her.

“Uhm, can I really come with you? Since I have no thief abilities, I’ll only be dead weight...”

To the Megumin that had been keeping a bit of distance out of guilt since the beginning, I replied,

“I had known that you were coming long ago. Besides, you could treat the masked version of me as an entirely separate personality. Right now, I am not the overpowered adventurer Satou Kazuma, but a high-bounty, most wanted criminal; the leader of the Masked Thieving Group. The time of full moon marks the peak of my righteous spirit, for in this moment, I am invincible. Undefeatable. And tonight... is no different!”

“Hey, Assistant-kun, are you sure you aren’t some sort of devil or demon? You’re only a normal human, right? Also, this is the Silver Haired Thieving Group, whose leader is me.”

I ignored Big Boss’ anticlimactic words. Though I still feel someone staring from behind, I ushered forward.

Because tomorrow, a certain batshit-insane person of nobility will be taking revenge for Megumin.

Considering how muscle-brained she is, I gave up negotiations the second I saw her steely eyes.

With that, the only time to steal the divine weapon of summoning would be before dawn.

As long as we can retrieve the weapon, we could give it as evidence to Darkness, and justly sue the noble for “threatening safety of Axel by summoning monsters”.

Thinking back, I was sent to Eris because of her, too. I’d also be a happy man if we found the evidence.

.....

“Well well, I’ve been feeling a concentrated stare for quite a while now.”

“Ah! S-s-sorry! Your mask is so cool, I can’t help but...”

It seems to have belonged to Megumin behind me.

“Say, we’re about to reach the gates. Put on your bandana, Megumin; tonight, you’re one of us Silver Haired Thieves, you know?”

Hearing Chris’ order, Megumin’s eyes shined as she excitedly put on her bandana.

“...Very bad news Chris, this girl’s eyes are red, a bandana wouldn’t help at all!”

“What do we do Assistant-kun!? I didn’t consider this!”

The bandana that covered just her mouth only further emphasized her special features.

There are merely two crimson mages in town. It'd be a miracle if we weren't recognized.

I passed my own mask to the obviously depressed Megumin.

"Can't help it. You'll have to wear my mask tonight. I'll make do with your bandana. I guess for tonight, you're the leader of the Masked Thieving Group!"

"Oi, Assistant-kun, shouldn't we standardize the naming convention of these thieving groups? Besides, the leader is me!"

Megumin smiled brilliantly upon receiving the mask.

"When we had the bounty placed, didn't Big Boss say 'Masked Thieving Group' was alright, and let me be its leader?"

"The news has died down. Plus, I was the original creator, of course it should be named after my characteristic silver hair!"

I started bantering with Chris as I put on Megumin's bandana.

"I am confident with my naming abilities. I could provide one for this thieving group if you want."

"Absolutely not." x2

I disagreed synchronously with Chris.

—Using Sneak, we easily breached the gates of Axel and snuck into the forest under the moonlight.

"Kazuma, I feel so cool with this mask on. This mask can be said to have been designed for crimson demons... Can I keep it?"

"I've also taken a liking to this mask recently, so you cannot have it. Vanir sells those masks in his shop, though it's quite often out of stock. Probably from its sheer popularity."

Chris, seemingly intrigued by our conversation, asked,

"Is Vanir that guy with the mask? I only caught a few glances of him from afar, like when he was chasing away crows and was thus dubbed the 'crowslayer'. He sounds like a good guy."

...What is she even saying.

Are all the goddesses in this world blind or something?

No, I remember her saying that she uses a mortal body when wandering in the living world, so she has no godly perception. Could that be why she never caught Vanir's true form?

Although I could picture terrifying events going down, I'm still morbidly curious about an encounter between Eris, Wiz and Vanir.

"—Oh, I see it. Come on Megumin, tonight we fight in vengeance for you. I don't have a good image of that person either."

As Chris spoke, Megumin cracked a smile as she looked upon the Mansion in the forest with sparkling red eyes.

"Come, let's go!"

Probably to fend off the monsters, two guards stood in front of the gates.

I activated Sneak and approached them from the dark, preparing to neutralize them.

Two guards.

I only need to cover their mouths from behind then use Drain Touch.

...Suddenly, a rustling noise came from the opposite direction of my approach, to the guards' 9 o'clock.

Both of them were alerted and turned left.

I took this chance and dashed forth with all my might. Each hand covering a mouth, I activated Drain Touch.

Seeing the two fall silently to the ground, Chris and Megumin came out from the woods.

"Uhm, you two seem to be veterans at this. Very impressive, especially Kazuma!"

The normally ungrateful Megumin admired us with respect.

The noise that caught the guards' attention seems to have come from a rock that Chris tossed.

“We were the most wanted thieves that breached the defenses of an entire royal castle, mind you. This is but a piece of cake.”

Chris chuckled with pride.

“Why are you bringing this up now? You had clearly been an underling for the fake thieving group recently. Say, Big Boss, why do you keep getting into these interesting situations the second I stop paying attention?”

“How the hell would I know? By raw luck, I’m supposedly better off than you.”

Putting it that way, Chris made me realize just how many ugly situations I’ve also been through even with my remarkably good luck.

I passed through the mansion grounds as I pondered, and came to the back door.

“...No kidding, our luck sure is great.”

“And by ‘great’, I think you mean more like ‘jackpot’.”

“The ‘veteran’ title rings true, staying calm under even this kind of circumstance.”

We exchanged glances, thinking of what to do in this scenario.

“No matter who you are, please come save me!”

Before us was Carleen, trapped within the grasp of a tentacle monster.

“—Th-thank you so so much! I nearly lost something priceless that’s of utmost importance to nobles...”

Chris and I went forth and rescued Carleen from the tentacle monster, before realizing that we were in a cage.

Further down the room was a door, but it was sectioned off by metal bars.

Looking at the design, it was probably used to summon monsters safely from the other side.

“This is... Why does the back door lead to a prison!?”

Carleen, who had just caught her breath and stood up, coughed as she said,

“That’s not the back door, but the release gate for unvaluable monsters.”

Only then did Carleen turn cautious. She held up something and threatened us not to move.

“Big Boss, didn’t this person mention ‘unvaluable monsters’? She has to be a criminal!”

“Hold on Assistant-kun, I haven’t found the divine weapon yet!”

Seeing how casual we are, Carleen yelled a little furiously.

“Who are you two really!? Why did you intrude, knowing what kind of place this is!?”

“You’re that notorious Tennessee family, aren’t you? Well, tonight, we’re paying you a visit.”

Chris answered grandiosely.

“So that’s how. Us usurers make a plenty of enemies. You’re one of them, correct? Well, unfortunately, tonight you will be guinea pigs for my latest product!”

Having said that, Carleen raised the dangerous looking object high up—

“Steal!” x2

Chris and I both activated our Steal and each obtained something.

“Huh!?”

We ignored the wide-eyed, screaming Carleen and inspected our loot.

“Sure I have it, but just what is this?”

“Ah, damn, I lost again! Why did I steal only panties yet again!”

The weapon Carleen was about to use ended up in Chris’ hands.

I only got white panties.

“Why is it that Kazuma’s steal is specialized for sexual harassment? ...Hey, let me take a look. I think I’ve seen it before... No, not the panties, I mean the stone!”

Chris handed her stone over to Megumin. I in the meantime thought about what to do with the panties. Carleen glared at me furiously, what a magical

situation.

“G-guards! We have intruders! They have unholy intents towards me!”

She finally remembered to call for help.

“This here is a forbidden magic weapon made from monster eggs. It can summon monsters, but that’s the extent of its abilities. It has no control over summoned monsters, and also summons at random. So, this is at most a ‘highly dangerous magical tool’.”

Hearing Megumin’s analysis, Carleen chuckled arrogantly.

“Only a ‘dangerous magical tool’? No, this is my magnum opus. By chance, it could summon monsters like large onion ducks and giant golden ants. So far, the most notable success was a baby dragon. Selling him alone has brought me more than enough money to cover for my ridiculous expenditures and wastes.”

We heard numerous footsteps outside. And now, putting some distance between us, Carleen took out a brand new stone from the shelf.

In other words, this chick summons monsters inside this partition. If it ends up being valuable, she sells it. If not, she opens the back door and releases them into the forest.

Eventually, as the discarded monsters accumulated, problems arose; and thus, the strongest adventurer in Axel—I—was called to clean up her mess.

“Big Boss, she is but a measly delinquent, just watch her admit to her own crimes.”

“Assistant-kun, you should never turn such a thought into words. Although, she’s only a letdown for me. Here I thought she had the divine weapon...”

“Be quiet you two; look, she’s blushing...”

Our calmness agitated Carleen to raise the second stone.

“Laughing in the face of death, you two can go repent in hell! The mansion security will also be here soon—”

“Steal!” x2

Before Carleen could finish, we used Steal again.

“Still my win.”

“No, wait. To me, compared to that rock, this thing pleases me more. As for who won, I think I did.”

“What a dirty pervert. Saying that in front of us...”

In my hand are Carleen’s bras.

Chris has the stone.

“What the hell!? What are you two here for!?”

Now not only covering her crotch but also her breasts, Carleen glared back on the verge of tears.

Just then.

“My lady, what is happening!?”

“Intruders! Capture them now!”

Carleen pridefully said to the mansion security.

—However, they were on the other side of the bars.

“Assistant-kun, this chick is hopeless.”

“I knew that from the start. Merely someone playing

Gashapon

(TL note: a Japanese toy sold from vending machines that functions like a Kinder Surprise) but with taboo magic

.”

“What is a Gashapon? Forget that—why is she summoning monsters from inside the cage? She couldn’t have accidentally summoned one while cleaning the shelf, could she?”

Hearing my breakdown, Carleen’s face flushed to the maximum. Chris nodded in agreement.

“We’ve only been here for a short while, but I think it’s time to go. Take the magic toy as evidence for the Dustiness family.”

Carleen's face instantly turned pale.

"H-hold on! I will not let you guys win! Even like this, as a high-tier noble, I can still make enough time for the security to come over—"

"Steeeeeeaaaaa—"

"Don't, Assistant-kun! If you keep stealing, theft wouldn't be your only crime!"

Chris hurriedly stopped my third steal on Carleen.

"What could go wrong? Let us just bare her nude form for all of her own servants to see!"

Megumin made such a cruel statement towards the Carleen who's now only covered by a single dress. Realizing the severity of her situation, Carleen fell onto the floor and edged backwards, trembling in fear.

As Chris had said, it's about time we retreated.

Possibly recognizing our style and attitude, Carleen exclaimed—

"I knew I've seen this mask somewhere before. You're that Masked Thieving Group, aren't you!? Our family won't fall from a little forbidden item. Just you wait, I will raise your bounties tenfo—I'm just joking! Sorry!!"

She yelled in fear at a flick of my wrist.



Epilogue

The next morning.

“HAHAHAHAHAHA! AHAHAHAHhahaha~! Tennessee you little shit, just wait till you witness what I am capable of doing with this! You’ve done God’s work, Kazuma! HAHAHAHAHAHA~!”

Darkness laughed hysterically in the living room.

I’ve given the summoning weapon as a piece of evidence to Darkness and briefly explained what had happened last night.

I was scolded for committing thievery, but as one could tell, it paid off.

“Yawn... What is it, all? Why is everyone up so early?”

A pajamas-clad Aqua waddled down the stairs with a pouch in hand.

“We didn’t wake early but pulled an all-nighter. I’ll go sleep now, be awake at around sundown.”

“Did you go gaming again? You filthy NEET, I didn’t expect any better.”

The person who didn’t want to be left out yet had been drinking the whole night said something like that.

Then, Aqua spilled the contents of the pouch onto the table, captivating Megumin.

“Aqua, what are these? They look like stones.”

“Not bad, Megumin. Crimson Demons sure have good eyes.”

This Crimson Demon’s eyes were so good that she didn’t find out my true identity until now.

I mentally scrutinized as I sipped my coffee.

“These...are magical stones that I’ve been collecting. They’re rarely found in rivers, ponds and puddles. I occasionally polish them from time to time... Want one?”

“Not at all.”

...This girl continues living leisurely as we did all the hard work.

Although the whole summoned monsters debacle has died down, the divine weapon is still nowhere to be found. Chris had no choice but to keep looking for it.

I really want this negatively useful goddess to learn from that earnest, true goddess.

“Say, Aqua, you kept heading out of town a while ago, what were you doing out there? Lately, I haven’t been paying attention to Megumin, and look what happened. So right now I want to make sure...”

“Hold it, Darkness. Don’t treat me like some problem child! I was doing quests for the Adventurer’s Guild. Remember my ultra-powerful water cleansing abilities? The Guild assigned me to cleanse the lake that was polluted by the Kowloon Hydra, so I gave it 110% of my efforts!”

I savoured the precious moment of peace and kept sipping my coffee. Megumin came next to me, holding something tightly against her chest.

She seems to have feelings that she can’t express.

“Uhm, sorry for doubting you, Aqua.”

“Are you really sorry? If so, please buy one of my stones. I spent all my janitor money and had just been worried about income.”

Using the background noise from the bickering duo, I teased Megumin—

“Do you have something you wanna tell me? Heheh, unless you want my signature after finding out my true identity? Or maybe a handshake?”

“Negative.”

Megumin rejected instantly. She looked around for a bit, and after some consideration—

“...Well, thanks a bunch. Thank you for taking my revenge.”

So that’s the matter.

“Not much of a revenge. I simply wanted to vent my rage after that woman

got me killed. Besides, aren't you one of us now? With that, isn't it only natural that we avenge our own teammate?"

My cool line put a shy smile on Megumin's face.

"Then, should I start calling Kazuma 'Big Boss' from now on?"

"Sure, no problem. Since the name of the wanted thieving group was the "Masked Thieving Group", I'm fine with being called the boss... Hey, don't you ever dare tell that to Chris, she'd kill me."

Megumin chuckled at my mini-panic attack.

"Of course, I'll keep it a secret... under one condition."

She held the item even closer against her chest.

"Could I go on missions with you two? Once in awhile is fine."

With that, she handed me back the Vanir mask that she had been tightly clutching.

